

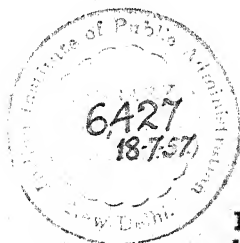
*By the same Author*

THE HORIZON OF EXPERIENCE  
LEISURE IN THE MODERN WORLD  
MODERN CIVILIZATION ON TRIAL  
DEMOCRACY: ITS DEFECTS AND ADVANTAGES  
GOVERNMENT AND INDUSTRY  
INDUSTRY AND CIVILIZATION  
PRINCIPLES OF REVOLUTION  
INTRODUCTION TO THE SOCIAL SCIENCES  
THE PHILOSOPHY OF LABOUR  
A SHORT HISTORY OF INTERNATIONAL INTERCOURSE

THE CHALLENGE  
TO  
DEMOCRACY  
**COMPUTERISED**

*by*

C DELISLE BURNS



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## PREFACE

THE challenge to democracy is most clearly expressed in the support given to dictatorship. But there is a deeper challenge in the situation out of which dictatorship has arisen. Dictatorship may be objectionable; but arguments against it should not hide the difficulties with which the democratic tradition itself is faced; for dictatorship is only an effort to meet the needs of the present situation by resorting to primitive methods of organizing the desire for a life in common. And even if we reject dictatorship, we shall still have to face the fact that poverty and war and other evils exist. What is to be done about such evils? It is clear at least that we cannot safely wait for the clouds to roll by, in any country.

The challenge which is felt in the pressure of evils is, from another point of view, an effort of new forces to seek an outlet among institutions which have been inherited from a very different past. The desire for social change is due mainly to the dissolution of traditional customs and the consequent feeling of isolation or helplessness, especially among the young. If men and women feel that they are out in the cold, they will fly to any refuge—even the lair of the cave-man. The real issue, therefore, is not a question of political devices or economic organization: it is a challenge to the whole basis of civilized life—the free discussion of opposing views and the criticism of authorities.

## *The Challenge to Democracy*

Simple or primitive minds believe that criticism and discussion will dissolve loyalty and undermine security; but it is precisely these—criticism and discussion—which have discovered new truth and established new forms of civilized life. Therefore, in answer to the challenge, the democratic tradition must be carried forward so as to rescue ordinary folk not only from the dangers of dogmatism and persecution under dictatorship, but also from the loneliness and insecurity of a decaying social order. That is to say, free criticism and open discussion must be proved to lead to a new sense of community, and of the common good to be shared by all. Not dictatorship against democracy, but barbarism against civilization, is the issue.

This book is not a programme of reform or reconstruction, but a discussion of the emotional force necessary for advance beyond the horizon of the nineteenth century in politics and economic organization. It does not deal with institutions except as examples of social tendencies. The proverb says that one cannot make a silk purse out of a sow's ear; and there are already many published designs for silk purses. But this book deals with the sow's ear. It proposes certain changes in ordinary men and women, to be achieved mainly by themselves. Not the design but the material for a new social order is in question.

The test of success for such a book would be that the burden is reduced and the benefits of civilized

## *Preface*

life increased for actual dock-labourers, textile workers, coal-hewers, and other such men and women. That is the only valid test of a policy for "the nation" or "the community"; and it is the only test of the value of peace as opposed to war. But the improvement in the life of actual men and women is not proposed out of kindness to the poor or dislike of the rich. Its purpose is to raise the level of the life of all in the community, first among neighbours in any area, next in the whole nation, and finally in the world at large.

The central idea in such a policy is that a society of equals, sharing equally the burdens and benefits of civilized life, is desirable. It is argued that we can make another step now towards that society and away from the slave-civilization which still survives in our minds, if not actually in our industrial system.

Authorities are not quoted. It is assumed that Adam and Karl are dead—that is to say, the second Adam who was a Smith, not a gardener, and lived in a peculiar paradise no longer to be found; and that other, Karl, is so named here to show affection for Marx. Their ghosts rise, as large as life, in current controversy. Adam haunts the Universities; and Karl inspires enthusiasm in Clydebank and Camden Town. But the majority of those who are interested in public affairs are not violent partisans of any old gospel. They are themselves quietly searching for the right way forward and keeping the world going meantime by all kinds of simple acts. The first article

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of the faith implied in this book is—"I believe in the Nobodies." It is, therefore, an appeal to that sense of community in ordinary folk which has saved civilization from violence in the past, but now requires a new effort from us, the common people. Civilization has never yet been defeated by barbarism; but it has sometimes been lost by inertia and division between those who should have understood how to maintain it. Can we rise to the occasion now? That is the challenge to our tradition.

\* \* \*

The book is based upon a course of lectures delivered in Glasgow in 1934 under the terms of my appointment as Stevenson Lecturer in Citizenship in the University of Glasgow.

C. DELISLE BURNS

GLASGOW

*June 1934*

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## SUMMARY OF THE ARGUMENT

CONFLICTING interests destroy a community unless they are subordinate to a sense of the common good. But when fundamentals are in dispute the traditional sense of the common good may not be strong enough to prevent civil war or war between nations. Dictatorship is the result of civil war, veiled or open; but its advocates and supporters claim to stand for a common good. The alternative to dictatorship must be at least as attractive emotionally to those who are interested in public affairs, especially the youthful. It is not enough to repeat the sacred phrases of a past generation about "free" trade, "individual" liberty, and parliaments. What our grandfathers worked for is not enough for us. But what more do we want? That is the general problem to be discussed in this book.

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Whose good does public policy secure? The democratic tradition of the past century is connected with the conception that each should look after his own good and that public policy should only "keep the ring" for a general scramble. That conception did not dissolve society, because habit was still unconsciously governed by an earlier conception of common life. But now the old habits are dissolving; and we shall lapse into barbarism unless a new conception of the common good prevents resort to violence. Politicians and Parties seem to be more concerned with how to get power than with what to do when they have power. But a common good must be clearly conceived as the reason for power if social co-operation is to continue. How can this purpose be stated in modern terms? Who is to share in the common good? A select few or all? And what is the good to be shared?

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Neighbours may disagree about religion or "politics" or cash; but they do not generally disagree about water-supply and drains. The simplest remedy of evil seems to be to hit someone else on the head, but this does not improve the drains. Co-operation is better for drains. Thus a common good is discovered and worked for by people who disagree in other matters, and each can gain from that common good without the other losing. In practice a new kind of good is produced. For attaining that, not altruism but a development of the social elements in each person is required. The institutions of city government, recently improved, require invigoration. The dominance of the common good in public policy depends upon those who have a sense of that good in terms applicable to the existing conditions. Not everyone in a city has an equal sense of that city. Most people cannot understand what to work *for* as easily as they can understand what to work *against*.

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The "Nation" is the conception used as a means of escape from industrial conflict, but the metaphor of war has to be used to explain even the common good in peace. The American experiment is important for us. The United States, like all modern nations, covers a population with a certain sense of a common tradition as a basis for law and order. Under the government so maintained, industry has grown up. But the purpose of individual enterprise has been believed to be the getting of wealth by any group at the expense of all others, and the result has been economic depression. Modern "economic nationalism" is not the same thing as the old "Protectionism." A new sense of "the nation" is affecting industrial and financial organization; and it rests with this generation to see that the direction taken by the new forces is not oppressive nor destructive. It is not a choice between old-fashioned Nationalism and Internationalism, but between two kinds of Nationalism.

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The relation between Nations is like an empty area in which strange currents of wind sometimes play. Traditionally each Nation "defends" itself by causing danger to others, and "interested" parties see to it that the tradition is maintained. But more serious is the glamour of war service as a pursuit of a common good and an occasion for self-devotion among the finest men. Peace, by contrast, does not excite any enthusiasm; for it is conceived as only a time when everybody looks after his own interest. The institutions of peace, therefore, the League of Nations in particular, have not been supported by either intelligence or goodwill on the part of the representatives of the Great Powers. But the fundamental difficulty is that the conception of peace is vague. When peace is an opportunity for devotion to a common good as well recognized as the common good pursued in war, then peace will be secure. But that common good must be one shared by all Nations.

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After discussing *whose* good public policy should secure, we should discuss what that good includes. Nothing is more "individual" than health; but nothing more obviously depends nowadays upon public organization. The city area began by being a death-trap, and yet in that area life has been lengthened and vitality during life increased. The remedy for evils has led to a new ideal—the production of a vigorous community. That is to say, public policy once helped those who were defective; now it supports all members of the community. We have created a new ideal without intending it; the conception of a healthy and vigorous community. The rates and taxes have given to each of us a better chance of living longer and more vigorously. This has changed the relationship between different generations and released unsuspected abilities of life in a community. Public services are not "charities" to the poor, nor extractions from the rich; they are from the community for the common good.

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The production of goods has increased not only because of industrial organization, but also because of more settled and competent government, and because of the applications of physical sciences to production. The revolution in social conditions which should follow is prevented because habits and policy continue to be based upon an "economy of want," when we are actually living under an "economy of surplus." No distinction is yet made between goods that are not sold because they are not needed by anyone and goods that are not sold because those who need them lack purchasing power. In war-time that distinction affects policy: munitions and food production take precedence of racecourses, because of a conception of the common good. Is there no similar common good in times of peace? The direction and control of production becomes necessary when anything can be produced in any quantity, although such direction may have been unimportant in the experimental period, when we were perfecting the power to produce. We have passed the initial experimental period in power-industry, but our social organization has not yet been adjusted to the changes.

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What is available is, first, an unlimited possibility of increasing the power to produce goods and services. But even the existing power to produce is not used. It need not be used, if society is to remain what it has so far been, under the unconscious influence of the pre-democratic ideal. Most communities are still based upon the vague feeling that some people should have only what makes them "work" well and others should have larger opportunities for free enjoyment. But humanitarian feeling has led to a gradual increase of the "surplus" available for the former class; because shorter hours and public parks were at first regarded as amendments of evils. Now, however, an entirely new principle is beginning to be understood,

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not humanitarianism, but a *sense of the community* in which all are members, with rights to a share in all the advantages of civilization. Public policy already provides for a general use of some necessities and some luxuries. Part of the surplus of goods and services is in the common goods which each can use as he likes. The surplus power to produce should be used, not for rich or poor, but for the common good.

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Education may be useful in preparing people for work; and in the older conception the education of "the people" was confined to this purpose, while education in its wider sense was reserved for those who had a surplus of leisure and wealth above the bare needs of their occupation, if they had any. But in practice it was not found possible to confine the education of any person to what would be useful for work. The new principle was operative before it was consciously grasped—that all education is a common good, in the sense that it should give to every member of the community an opening into the wider world within which work occurs. That is to say, education should save men and women who have to work for a living from merely working for a living. It should be therefore, in one of its aspects, a luxury, economically "useless." In the community we now have power to produce, the education of everyone should be better than the education of the privileged few has been in the past. Education should produce people who are "too good" for the world they have to live in.

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Is it more important that a person is a mathematician or that he is an "Aryan"? Is it more important that a sonata should be good music or that it should be "proletarian"? The dictatorships seem to imply that science and the arts should be subordinated to a particular set of conclusions

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and attitudes emotionally satisfying to the half-educated. It is true that neither the scientist nor the artist is "free" from social responsibility. But his responsibility is not to any particular institutions or doctrines, it is to a "city of God" which is the ideal, a community of free men in a world at peace. The tradition of "democratic" discussion of public policy is only a part of the tradition of civilized life, which depends upon free scientific inquiry and artistic originality. It is impossible to preserve science and art in a society of dogmatic politics and economics. The contrast between "democracy" and "dictatorship" is the contrast between civilization and barbarism, between fraternity and fanaticism.

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The most important distinction between men is not that between rich and poor, clever and foolish, strong and weak, but the distinction between those who have a sense of the community and those who have not. Nobodies generally have a better sense of the community than "great" men; and besides, in a world of advertisement the tests of greatness are peculiar. In any case, Nobodies have in their hands the making of the future, in all its deeper and stronger currents. Even in the Dark Ages the future was made by Nobodies who carried on. Work at the foundations of a new community, not visible to the organs of publicity, is to be done by Nobodies; but they should be kind to their "leaders." They are doing their best. The kind of greatness in "great" men depends upon the judgment of Nobodies.

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## CHAPTER I

### THE CRISIS

THE world is in a bad way. Increased productive power has led to more starvation; and the general desire for peace has redoubled the preparations for war. In countries with a democratic tradition, the old faith in votes is not what it was; and in certain other countries, a political ecstasy maintains a gospel whose advocates substitute for argument the violent suppression of their critics. It may be regarded as offensive to note that the world has been in a bad way many times before. To do so might seem to underestimate the importance of our own crisis; and crisis-politics is popular. But it cannot be denied that the crisis, even if it is not unique, is important.

There is a very widespread sense of uncertainty, openly confessed in some countries; while in others excitement is deliberately fostered in order to cover uncertainty. Those who are interested in public affairs, always a minority, seem to be uncertain both about their enemies and about their friends. Their enemies may be hatching new plots; and the best of friends may not agree to die together. As always, the great majority in all countries are passive. They take what

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comes from Governments or from any others among the Powers That Be as they take a change in the weather. They are too busy getting or enjoying what will keep them alive and happy to spend valuable time in thinking how to alter the established order into which they were born. But the unrest among the minority who think about public affairs is spreading; and many who are unwilling to think are only too easily induced to feel violently about what is happening. What, then, causes the increased unrest and uncertainty?

### *Sources of Unrest*

Something much deeper down in men's minds than a mere dislocation of the productive system: something deeper than discontent with representative Assemblies. The economic and political difficulties of to-day are great enough; but they are themselves due to moral, religious, and cultural tendencies; and these again may be due to biological changes still more fundamental. Those depths will not be explored in this book; but it will be assumed that the problems of public policy should be considered in a much wider setting than political science and economics can provide. The controversies, for example, about forms of government—Dictatorship or Democracy—and about forms of economic organization—Capitalism or Socialism—are phases of a much larger question—the problem of the Way Forward in the whole of experience. How ought we to live so as to get the most

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out of life? An answer is needed in terms of deeds to be done.

But conceptions of desirable life, whether in the form of heaven in another world or Utopia in this, are due to very much deeper sources than political controversy and economic distress. Very little is known of the currents under the surface in history; but biological and physiological tendencies may have been at work even behind the change from paganism to Christianity. In any case, fundamental biological and psychological changes have recently occurred in most European and American countries. For example, the average length of human life has increased and the normal vitality has improved. There is a smaller proportion of children to adults; and that, among other causes, has completely changed the position of women. Both sexual repression and prostitution have decreased. The younger generation is more actively interested in public affairs and is less inclined to believe in the value of the "experience" of aged politicians or business men or Trade Union leaders—not because of an economic theory, but because of physiological changes. The aged decay more slowly, survive longer, and are more vigorous than in earlier times. Therefore in economic and political activities they are more frequently rivals of the young. Hence more hostility between the generations and new parties appealing to "youth." In such circumstances, to advocate solutions for problems of public policy as if they were questions

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of parliamentary debate or property-owning is to offer a mustard plaster as a cure for a deep wound. What is at stake is the fundamental reaction to traditional conceptions of life. An increasing number of the more active spirits do not accept the assumptions on which the discussions of their grandfathers rested. They dispute what their forefathers took for granted. But if so, perhaps contemporary problems are due to changes which are desirable! If better health leads some to dancing instead of sleeping, the disturbance in the neighbourhood may be deplored by others; but it should not be opposed. What is wrong with the world may be due to what is right with the world; and that, perhaps, may explain why this book is not lugubrious. Our troubles are the growing pains of a new age; or, in a less lofty metaphor, we are growing out of our clothes. There must be some way of living more comfortably, without impeding our growth.

The problem is one for religion, the arts, the sciences, and the half-conscious skill of common sense; and perhaps in the end it may be solved by changes over which we have no control. Here, however, the argument is limited to the field in which public policy—the conscious common action of groups—can directly affect the discovery of a life worth living. The larger issues of religion, culture, and biological tendency are therefore deliberately kept in the background—they are not the subject of this book; but they are not so completely forgotten as they usually are among



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those who write about government and the exchange of wealth.

### *The Political Situation*

First, the existing situation with respect to public policy must be shortly described; for it differs slightly in different countries, although it is the result of the same tendencies everywhere.

In countries with a democratic tradition—France, Great Britain, the United States, and the smaller West European States—the great majority are supposed to give some attention to public policy; and indeed the minority who are active in public affairs is larger in these States than elsewhere. They have been taught for about a century that they can control their Governments. But even in these countries the majority do not want to exercise such control. They prefer to be left undisturbed; and if they are stirred into an uneasy agitation for a moment, they seek first for those who will give them another period of quiet life. The reason is partly that the majority do not believe that voting and other such political methods make much difference to the established order—either for its maintenance or its destruction, and partly that, if they had power, they would have no clear idea what to do with it. In countries outside the democratic tradition the passive majority is much greater and the minority which is active in public affairs very much smaller. The smaller that minority in any nation, the more fiercely its members disagree with one another. In



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an entirely unpolitical country the politicians are divided by personal feuds. In all such countries it is easy to swing a minority into power by an appeal to the non-political man to leave it all to their betters. Any fool can claim to be wise, if none of his hearers has ever thought of the subject he talks about. But no section of the minority can obtain complete power over public policy unless an unsettled situation makes the passive majority irritable, sensitive, or susceptible. Revolution is impossible so long as food-supplies are regular and adequate for the traditional status of different groups. Even a revolution of "the Right" has to be supported by the argument that the country is going to the dogs; and the only proof which is conclusive is lack of food. Only when the great majority are uncomfortable do their tempers become irritable enough to induce them to take a hand in public affairs. And when they are irritable their method is not likely to be that of discussion and compromise and carefully considered decisions. Thus, both in countries of the democratic tradition and elsewhere, changes in the means of livelihood, themselves the results of still deeper changes, bring the passive majority into greater or less agitation about public policy, which is usually considered only by a few.

Disturbance of the traditional ways of production and of the supplies or services to which a community had become accustomed creates the occasion for violence as a political method. Hence the advocacy of dictatorship. But the reasons given for preferring

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dictatorship to democracy are never the real grounds which move men to impose it or accept it; for the only real ground is so violent an irritation with things in general that it makes the unpolitical reckless.

As the unconscious tendency to trust the old routine decreases in strength the conscious planning to get control over one's opponents becomes more vigorous. And the vague sense of a common good shared with one's opponents is replaced by a definite feeling that one's own interest *is* the common good. But when each side stands not for an "interest," in the old sense, but for a "common good," each side is more willing to fight the other. When one side is confessedly seeking only its own interest it cannot very well object to the other side seeking another interest. But when each believes that it has the secret of universal salvation it will persecute the other side in order to save even among opponents whatever is worth saving. It will appeal to force in the name of a common good. And it is quite easy to believe that one's own interest is the common good.

## *Arguments for Violence*

Some reasons, however, are usually given for violence on the Right or the Left. Those inclined to be conservative argue that order is obviously a common good. Disorder increases the risk of suffering for every one. One tangible order is the traditional order. Every other order is Utopian. Let us "stick to the

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devil we know," for the sake not only of the beneficiaries of the old order, but of all who might fare worse if we went further. And if the old order is shaky, at least let us have some form of order based upon tradition; for progress is best without disturbance—best for all, not merely for the privileged who might be disturbed by certain changes. No change, therefore, ought to take place which would cause disturbance of expectations. The only change which is a common good should increase security for those who know how to use security; and revolution, therefore, must be resisted by force.

Against this view, those who desire social changes argue that the old order which brought us to such a pass is not likely to have any better results if we patch it up for another trial. Recovery would only set us again in the position from which we fell. Again, they would say, the victims of any social order know best what that order is worth; for the beneficiaries do not usually think about it at all—they take it for granted. But one cannot make those who are complacent think by mere argument. They understand nothing until they suffer. They will not yield, except to force. It is a common good, therefore, that all the members of a community should bear part of the burden of getting what every one values. And that common good, not the interest of the "have-nots" only, is the ground for revolution. Let us have done with words and take action: progress depends upon force to overcome entrenched privilege.

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Each party in this controversy assumes that its own force will be successful. Force is the method proposed; but it is assumed by anyone who appeals to force that his own force is superior to his opponent's; for no one willingly enters a battle which he knows he will lose. The risks of a gambler are always conceived by him to be in his favour.

Civil war is not advocated by anyone. Victory of "the right side," not war, is desired, whenever dictatorship is praised; and it is not too clearly admitted that the only method of obtaining a victory is a war. In every large community there are some vigorous and not too intellectual men and women who really prefer fighting, perhaps from an unconscious feeling that they are better at that than they are at reasoning. But even the bellicose say that war is for the sake of peace. It is always "the other fellow" who began it! But even outside the small circle of bellicose women and men the appeal to force has a certain attractiveness in moments of general excitement. A declaration of war relieves the ordinary man from the trouble of thinking about the issues in dispute. The confusion of different opinions is swept aside; and the majority have the satisfaction of feeling that their duty at last is clear. They must fight. Even in issues which divide parties or groups within a nation, it is a relief for most people not to have to discuss their opinions with their opponents. And if the issue is deeply felt, it is easy to believe

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that nothing remains but to fight for one's own view. One's opponents are naturally regarded as either knaves or fools.

Since the Great War, indeed, an increasing number have believed that no one is serious in his purposes unless he is prepared to kill and maim his opponents in order to attain them. Thus, to suggest that persuasion may still be possible, if one is skilful enough at it, is regarded as a mere excuse for complacency. If a poor man does not hate the rich, or a rich man fear the poor, he is thought to be lacking in virility. And single separate reforms of distinguishable evils are regarded by "the Right" as cowardly concessions and by "the Left" as mere substitutes for destroying the System. Tempers are rising in most countries; and the new generation, fresh to problems of public policy in any case, are all the more excitable because the issues themselves are new and the experience of the old seems to be useless.

## *The Use of Persuasion*

Even if it be granted, however, that our present position is desperate, it does not necessarily follow that we shall have to fight about it against those who disagree with us. Surely, if a conflict is likely, it is best to try some other way before it actually begins! It cannot be the part of a wise man to do nothing, even at the last moment, to find a way of making those social changes which he thinks desirable or resisting

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changes which he thinks bad without killing or maiming his opponents. And if he does not succeed in preventing either civil war or war between nations, he may perhaps be excused for having tried. But in order to discover what ought to be done now—before the fighting begins—it is useful to decide *why* conflicting interests to-day seem to be more important than any such sense of a common good as made it possible for our grandfathers to rely upon ballots rather than bullets. Waiving the discussion of more fundamental causes for a lack of mutual forbearance, what is the direct political cause of the appeal to force? Why do political opponents nowadays want to sweep the other fellow out of existence, and not merely to take turns with him in government?

It is said that the older controversies of politics were superficial, but that now fundamentals are in dispute; and indeed some of the controversies of the 1880's and 1890's, in which the leading politicians of to-day in England and France and the United States were trained, seem very trivial now. The old game of the "Ins" and the "Outs," in the changes of Governments, does not seem to-day to be worth continuing. Political parties could agree to stage a sham fight, when nothing that either valued deeply was at stake. But now the issues in public policy touch, for example, the fundamental right of private property and the right of each nation to defend itself as it chooses. This is said to be the reason for the tendency to armed conflict between political groups. But the explana-

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tion does not go far enough; and in some ways it is misleading.

It is an illusion that what has happened already was less important than any issues we ourselves have to face. Social changes always seem to be small when they have already occurred; and therefore difficulties which seemed at one time to involve desperate risks appear to be trivial after they have been surmounted. But if allowance is made for this illusion, it may still be possible to regard the situation to-day as more critical than that of 1789 or 1830. The reason is not exactly that the issues are more fundamental, but that the dominant psychological attitude or "set" of men's minds has changed. *The unconsciously accepted assumptions of traditional habit are no longer strong enough to maintain that habit.* The basis of law, custom, and public policy, in the generally accepted conventions, is no longer secure. Behind the actual issues in dispute, about Authority and Property, the "set" of the mind has changed. The general feeling of a necessary, inevitable or natural life in common has evaporated. There is no unconscious unity among men strong enough to maintain the old habits.

Looked at more closely, the changes hitherto undertaken without armed force were made within a society very different from ours in its governing assumptions about the life worth living. During the nineteenth century government in most Western countries came more and more under the direct influence of the



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majority of the members of each community. The franchise was extended. The privileges of governing classes were restricted or removed, especially with regard to the armed forces and the civil services. Administration of the law became less favourable to the rich and powerful than it had been. The services of government were extended into new spheres for the advantage of common folk, in sanitation, water-supply, roads, and schools, and in the regulation of conditions in manufacture. Some social reforms on the European continent were achieved by revolutionary movements, as in 1830 and 1848. In some instances there was momentary civil war; and in spite of a much more flexible system of government, civil war also occurred in the United States in 1861. But in Great Britain even the threat of violence in the 1830's came to nothing; and yet the franchise was extended in 1832, 1867, 1918, and 1928. Local government was freed from gang-control in 1833 and 1888. The civil service was reformed in the 1870's. The traditional brutality of the law and its weighting against the poor were gradually changed. The protection of wage-earners was extended from the early factory Acts in the 1830's to the Trade Boards Act of 1905 and the Unemployment Insurance of 1911 and 1918. And entirely new activities of government, local and central, in health and education, were introduced. The final result has been in all Western States a transformation of the system of government and of its relation to the governed, which was much more



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revolutionary than the changes made by the French Revolution.

It may be said that all these changes made no essential difference, that they were merely efforts to soothe the victims of the established order, so as to render them more submissive. It may be argued that the great evils, poverty and war, still remained, untouched by all the improvements of the nineteenth century: and that, therefore, the methods used for curing minor evils are irrelevant for greater issues. But the changes seemed fundamental to many on both sides; and yet the controversies which preceded each step in the progress made did not lead to a gospel of violence. There was, from time to time, a threat of violence, sometimes from those who opposed change, sometimes from those who demanded it. But on the whole violence was not adopted on principle as a political method, nor did either side think it right to kill and maim its opponents, as is now the case in all dictatorships.

## *The Theory of "Interests"*

That violence was avoided is all the stranger if the theory and conscious practice of politics during those years is considered. In theory each "interest" or "group" pressed for representation in order to secure a share in the public power and in the benefits expected to flow from its use. It was assumed that there was a

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certain store of power and benefits in the possession of privileged groups; and other groups were organized to compel the privileged to yield a share. In the end, it was believed that a balance of interest or the pressures of conflicting groups led to that equilibrium which was the social order. Thus even the trade unions were conceived by their members to be claiming a share in rights which already existed, and not to be forming an entirely new body of powers or rights. The "interests" in politics were, so far as conscious theory was concerned, in conflict. Anyone who was not "represented" would not have a place in the general scramble and would not obtain a share of what was to be divided. Similarly, each individual was supposed to aim chiefly at his own "interest"; and the common good was believed to be the accidental or providential result of the balance of conflicting egoisms. Practice followed theory as far as each man or group dared to carry it. No one was supposed to consider the arguments against his view; for lawyers dominated politics, and the lawyer, like the theologian, aims at making a case for the side he adopts, not at considering all sides of a question. Public policy was supposed to be discovered by a balancing of the arguments of opponents; and each side in politics did as much for its supporters as it could while it was in power. Such a practice and theory, however, make it all the more astonishing that the improvement of the general situation for the advantage of this or the other conflicting interest did not lead to the

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general use of violence, And yet now, when the common good and not conflicting interests is supposed to be the basis of policy, the appeal is made to violence.

The more fundamental reasons for the change of attitude have been indicated above. Those who think most vigorously and feel most deeply are uncertain—not merely of the means but of the purpose at which they ought to aim; and this uncertainty has biological and deep psychological causes. Also the unintended results of some economic activities in creating an unused surplus of goods have disturbed the traditional customs in production and consumption. And in addition to these deeper and these less fundamental causes the psychological effect of the Great War has disturbed the normal confidence in established authorities. But all these causes of the tendency to throw over compromise and to appeal to violence are beyond our direct control. We may, indeed, promote or prevent the decrease of the birth-rate or the accumulation of unused goods; and probably some social effects of the Great War could be eradicated by skilful government. But the ordinary influences of men upon other men must be controlled and directed in far simpler issues before we can hope to affect the larger social tendencies. We must have houses and food before we can have children or indulge the simplest appetites. We must have, at any rate, a few years of peace if we are to bring the next generation to a healthy maturity.

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### *The Old Restraint*

For immediate public policy, therefore, the question to be answered is—What practical attitude or influence among the majority during the past century prevented the “interests” or groups in conflict from destroying the common good which each shared with opponents? The answer seems to be that in the chief Western communities there was a sort of *subconscious acceptance of a traditional moral standard*, which induced most people “to draw the line” somewhere in their efforts to obtain what they wanted. It was vaguely felt, by a sufficient number, that “there are things no fellow could do.” The hesitation to use civil war was, in fact, due to a vague sense of a traditional standard of conduct, shared even with one’s opponents. In Great Britain certain actions were felt to be “not British” or “not playing the game.” In America it was a condemnation of any policy that it was un-American. And what was meant in each community was that there were traditional limits set to the acts one felt able to do for one’s own advantage. Eighteenth-century humanitarianism had modified men’s feelings since the wars of religion. Education made persuasion easier. The general sense of progress, due largely to an increasing survival-rate and expanding industrial production, made it possible, especially in America and England, for the majority to feel that there would be sufficient for all to have a larger share, so long as the process was not interrupted. And so, in spite of

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occasional appeals by extremists, the traditional order, while it was changed, was not greatly disturbed nor chiefly maintained by violence. The controlling influence was an unconscious or only partly conscious feeling for a common good in a common life inherited from the past. The moral and social order behind the political and economic was unconsciously accepted both by the reformers and their opponents.

The influence which kept opponents from using violence was an unconscious acceptance of the general features of the society into which the industrial system had been inserted. Most people did not question the old order which divided any community into "upper" and "middle" and "lower" classes. First the "middle" and later the "lower" classes demanded and were granted a share in the political power which was conceived to be already in existence, although preserved for themselves by the "upper" class. In industry the entrepreneur demanded and was granted a share in the power to decide how to produce, which was conceived to be already in existence, although in the hands of the landowners. Later the trade unions demanded and were granted a share in the existing power to decide about wages and conditions; and in spite of religious divisions in England, the Non-conformists obtained a share in the privileges hitherto reserved for members of the established Church; and some in the middle and lower classes claimed and were granted a right to have their own views on

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the accepted Christian tradition. They did not dispute the existence of a fixed store of truth. They desired only to have their own share of it admitted. Women claimed a share in the rights which men were supposed to possess—not new rights; and, in its most general sense, social equality meant only the equal chance for each person to make himself better than his neighbours. Freedom was only being “left alone” in an already existing society, which seemed to go of itself because the force that moved it was unknown. The dominant unconscious assumption was that a community already existed in possession of certain powers and rights; for to claim a share in what already exists implies an acquiescence in what already exists. An acquiescence, therefore, in the social order, like an acceptance of mediaeval authoritarianism in religion and of traditional “art,” was the dominant tendency even among the reformers of the nineteenth century. And this acquiescence was probably due, as it has been hinted above, to biological and psychological as much as to economic causes. The birth-rate and survival-rate rapidly increased. The newcomers had to find a place in the old home. There was no time to rebuild the foundations. The energetic left European countries for America; and there they found quite enough to employ their energies, without attempting to rescue the survivors in the old order which they thought they had deserted, or to question the assumptions of that system of society which they carried with them into the new world. It was generally

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assumed that the social classes and the pursuit of private wealth were in the nature of things.

### *Need of a New Control*

Now, however, the whole situation is changed. Partly because of biological and other such fundamental causes, partly because of disillusion following upon the Great War and the Small Peace, it cannot any longer be taken for granted that "there are things no fellow can do." What our forefathers unconsciously assumed is now generally questioned. The division of society into "upper" and "lower" classes, the importance of the private pursuit of wealth, the value of discussion with an opponent in one's neighbourhood—all these are under the eye of conscious criticism. But above all our forefathers assumed that the life in society was a sharing of certain powers and rights, already in existence; and we tend to think of powers and rights still to be created in a society which will be the result of conscious effort. If there are moral standards which will prevent conflicting interests from destroying the common good, we feel that those standards are still to be established. They cannot be accepted from the past. Even the Conservative nowadays tends to look forward rather than back. The days of acquiescence in the unconscious control of traditional habit are gone. The fundamental difference between that age and ours is the difference between *sharing* what already exists and *creating* what does not exist. It is the difference



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between the product and the process, as objects in the focus of attention. It is the difference between the attitude of childhood and that of adolescence.

Many of us have had experience in our own persons of this kind of change. The traditional standard which guides unconsciously the impulses of the child is like the standard which controlled politics in the nineteenth century in England and America. The child accepts the limits set to his energies by the adult society round him and is willing to move in the direction indicated by conventions. He is born into a "going concern"; and he naturally accepts the standards of the established order as the nature of things. Older people are part of the same structure as the fixed stars. But at adolescence doubt begins, just at the time when new and more fundamental impulses become active. The problem is then to find for one's self some standard which can be accepted in its own right and by conscious effort. Whether it is an old standard, now understood in a new sense, or an entirely new standard, the contrast lies between the child's unconscious acquiescence and the conscious effort of early manhood. A new person is formed; or a new basis is found on which further progress depends. This is the real birth of the personality, of which physical birth is only a premonition. Most of us do not suffer from the crisis of adolescence, because in most cases the distinction between unconscious acquiescence and conscious effort is obscure and slowly developed. But external circumstances some-



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times throw into a higher relief the difference between childhood and adult life.

Similarly in the life of a community there are crises in which acquiescence in an old standard gives place to a conscious effort to find a life worth living. And this crisis is usually most acute when a sufficient number of persons feel themselves to be *déracinés*—to be without a place in the traditional order of things. The effort is then made to regain the sense of *unity with others*, which was unconsciously assumed to exist in the old order. A new world must then be made; for the old world is shaken to its foundations. Thus to-day thousands of the younger generation do not believe that there is a place for them in the traditional order; but as compared with the older generation they are also fewer in number, and therefore have been better cared for than their forefathers were. They are less likely to acquiesce in an order which excludes them. The younger generation and especially women suffer less from sexual repression than their forefathers did; and are therefore less inclined for a surly scramble for money. They are more inclined for vigorous co-operation, if a common task can be found. Food is better; and the arts of life less crude. Therefore feelings run higher. New forces are in operation. They are here to be used or misused by anyone who has the requisite magic, white or black. In the body and spirit of the more active persons in any community, the search is for a new life in closer intimacy with others.

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### *Defective Methods of Control*

Fascism and Communism attract the best of their supporters precisely by offering a new sense of the common good, shared by all the members of a community; for, whatever may be said against these gospels, it would be foolish to underestimate the genuine idealism which has gained for them the support of generous youth. Both the gospels, which advocate violence as a means, conceive the purpose not as a victory of one interest over another, but as the creation of a new community. They contrast the balance of conflicting egoisms, which they wrongly suppose to be "democracy," with the devotion of each person to a common good. Fascists live for "the nation"; Communists for "the proletariat." But each gospel attempts to secure the union of its supporters by making a conscious plan for the common advantage of a whole community. The difficulty in accepting their claims is not an objection to devoting one's self to a common good; it is first that the good they advocate is not "common" enough, because Nazis exclude Jews, Fascists exclude Socialists, and Communists exclude capital-owners from a share; and secondly, the good they offer is not good enough, because it excludes that "good" which is *choosing one's own good*. But these points will be discussed later.

The most dangerous element in Fascism or Communism is what is good in it; but their answer to

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the appeal of the youth for a life in common, worth their devotion, can be given even more fully within the democratic tradition. The immediate problem for public policy to-day is the need of each person to find a place in a community, in which his work counts for more than his own gain. The old order does not provide such a place for millions of men and women—or rather, in so far as it does not, it is felt to be obsolete. And the need for a life in common, therefore, which was met by unconscious acquiescence at an earlier date, must now be supplied by conscious effort. For us who belong to the democratic tradition, it would be futile only to find arguments against dictatorship. The proof that there is another way forward must rest, not upon objections to any other plan, but upon the creation, in practice, of a new life in common, more inclusive and more intimate than any offered by the black magic of dictators. What, then, can we do, in countries in which there is more widespread understanding of public affairs, to produce this new life? And how is this new life to be shared by all, not as a reward to be enjoyed but as a common task to be undertaken?

The answer, for the purpose of deciding upon public policy, must have two aspects. First, it must express the kind of community for which work should be done, which should be maintained in so far as it exists already and created in so far as it is not yet in existence. Therefore public policy must be clearly conceived and deeply felt to be a service of some defi-

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nite group of men, women, and children. We must be able to say plainly for whom this or that act of policy is done; because it is not enough to reform particular evils if the whole structure of society is insecure. We must therefore create or invigorate the sense of unity with others in a common task. And secondly, having decided for whom the advantages of public policy are intended, we should make emotionally effectual the kind of advantage which is aimed at. We should feel more deeply or understand more clearly what is meant by health and wealth and happiness, as the concern of public policy.

The following chapters, therefore, discuss two different questions: first, For whom is public policy intended? and secondly, What is public policy intended to do for them? The whole argument is an attempt to fill the place left empty by a dissolving tradition of common life by a conscious desire for a new life in common, freer and finer than any offered by dictatorship.

## CHAPTER II

### THE CITY

THE simplest form of life in common is the life of neighbours in a city-area; but, being familiar, neither what makes it possible nor its effect upon the relation between men is clearly conceived. Not one in a thousand of the inhabitants of a city knows anything about the drains and the water-supply on which their daily life depends. But under the surface of the struggle for private wealth the binding forces of the community keep us alive.

#### *Actual Life in Common*

In any great city-area neighbours differ in the rate of incomes and in personal ability. They differ in religion, in political opinion, and in the enjoyment of books or dog-racing, as well as in those more subtle aspects of personality which make one man attractive or hateful to another. There are innumerable different circles or groups of friendship, religious practice, social standard or cultural attitude. But all the members of all these circles use the same drains, the same water-supply, the same roads, the same buses or trams. They have, therefore, these common goods; and it is assumed that public policy in city government should be for the advantage of all the inhabitants. A Catholic

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and a Protestant, each of whom may believe that the other will be damned eternally, do not hesitate meanwhile to sit side by side in the same bus. And not only do they *use* the same common services but, by paying taxes, they work together to *make* those services possible. The Catholic helps the Protestant, and the Protestant the Catholic, to go where he wants to go, on his way to whatever may be his final destination. But in Western countries religious passion is not strong. We have almost forgotten the days of Huguenot persecution, for example, in France when Catholic Governments persecuted Protestants and Protestants prevented Catholic ceremonies in the towns under their control. The passion which used to divide men in reference to the "after-life" now seems to be concentrated upon their differences of income. The "revolutionary Socialist" is hated by the well-conducted person with a secure income; and the hate is returned against the "bloated Capitalist." So far, in democratic countries, both sides use the same drains and sit side by side in the same bus. But this is not the case in all cities to-day. In Germany under the Nazis some common services, such as schools, are not available for Jews or Socialists or advocates of peace. In Italy under Fascists some services are not for Socialists; and in Russia under Communism some services are not for any other kind of Socialist, except the particular kind recognized as orthodox at the moment. In those countries the position is like that in Europe during the wars of

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religion. But with us—so far—it is different. This may not continue. The days of dictatorship may be coming upon us, too, when each of us will be hit on the head by one party or the other, if we are suspected of being lukewarm in the established faith. But so far, even those who differ in political opinion assist their political opponents to make and use the same drains. A candid account of the facts, therefore, and not any Utopian dream must allow that *even persons who hate one another can work together for some common ends*. It is not implied that they are better morally when they are sitting together in the bus than when they are cursing their opponents on platforms. But they are different in the two cases. As producers and users of common drains they have a life in common. They are integral parts of a single community. They are members of one another. And the "real" person is as truly a part of a larger whole as he is truly an individual when he makes and shares the common goods of a city-area. There is, then, an actual, if unconscious, community in the lives of all neighbours in a city-area. This life in common has been created by certain common services; and it is itself a force which may be used to assist in the removal of existing evils and the realization of still finer common life.

## *The Conflict of Interests*

The common services of the city have grown up in the midst of the traditional tangle of private enterprise,



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in separate and often opposing efforts to make a living out of the private sale of goods and services. Most of the activities of the inhabitants of any city-area are absorbed in a struggle for cash. They have to do something or make something which other folk want, in order to secure something they want for themselves; and the result of the pursuit of income used to be welcomed by economists as a proof that, if each sought his own advantage, every one would get what he deserved. This simple faith in economic predestination still dominates the economic relationships of most men in almost all the countries of the world; but to meet special needs another method was used for the distribution and use of water, drains, roads, and other such common goods. And nowadays the city holds together as a unit, not because of the "invisible hand" which guides the greed of grocers and their customers, but because the public authorities supply the basic needs of life in common. Neither the traditional theory of capitalism nor that of socialism is adequate to describe *all* the aspects of the system under which we live. But if anyone prefers to use the sacred words of traditional controversy he is welcome to do so. For the purpose here in view, it is enough to note that some common services exist, and that these make life possible in the city-areas of to-day. Without them even the scramble for cash could not be continued.

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### *The Making of a Life in Common*

The way in which people live in a modern city, therefore, has formed a new kind of community. The drains and the water-supply, and the paved streets, and public trams never existed before the late nineteenth century; and these are only the outward and visible signs of a certain kind of life in common. That life is almost unconscious; for the conscious activities of most of us are taken up with the conflict of rival efforts for income or, perhaps occasionally, with "national" issues. But if evidence of the meaning of "community" is required, it is to be found under our noses in the city streets and in the homes of the inhabitants of the city. The history, therefore, of the growth of this kind of life in common may be useful as a basis for future policy, both because of the influences which led to the making of drains and water-supply and because of the effect these common services have had.

How, then, did water and drains come to be shared among all the inhabitants of a city-area? Not by a balance of conflicting interests, nor by the victory of the victims of an earlier system over the beneficiaries, but by the discovery of an entirely new source of water-supply and a new method of drainage for every one. The city-area of the 1830's was the result of the crowding together of people who had lived in villages, who had inherited, therefore, from countless generations the habits and customs of villagers. Even the small cities of the ancient and mediaeval worlds

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were villages by contrast with the modern city-area; for the open fields were near to every part of them. In villages men had learnt to take water either from a private well, each for his own household, or from the village pump at a common well. The water-supply was in the midst of the houses; and so was the drainage, except when manure was needed in the neighbouring fields. We do not know how much mediaeval cities suffered from the drainage getting into the water-supply. But that problem obviously became much more important in the new city-areas, when the houses were more closely packed. Until the 1850's, for example, Glasgow, which was already a city-area of 300,000 inhabitants, depended for its water upon a few private wells in the grounds of rich people and a few public wells among the houses for the majority. Private companies carted water about for sale, for anyone who could afford it; and some companies had begun to use piped water-supply for private profit. But the water for the poor was so contaminated that cholera and typhus were common; and even the rich man's well was not secure from infection. The difficulty was met, not by confiscating the private wells, but by what many thought a fantastic idea—seeking a water-supply from a source twenty miles away. The common good—good water—thus obtained was made available to all the inhabitants of the city, without regard to differences of income, religion, race, or culture.

The history of water-supply, paved streets, drainage

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and, in some cases, common transport, was the same in all the new city-areas of the nineteenth century. We take it for granted now, but it was not obvious a century ago that cholera and typhus could be abolished. Still less was it obvious *how* they could be abolished, because many generations had used prayer and sacrifice and other methods and the old evils still endured. At last a method was found for the advantage of all—even the wicked! Is it not, then, possible that a method may be found for abolishing such other evils as still remain? And may it not be that the method, as with the old evils, will be different for different evils and not one panacea? And is it not further possible that the new method will be for the advantage of every one? But we need not answer such questions yet. The actual methods used for assisting all the inhabitants of the city-area must be considered first in further detail.

The new system began as a removal of nuisances. The quarters where the poor lived were obviously the sources of infection for the whole city. For the advantage of all, therefore, or, at its worst, for the protection of the rich, and not out of kindness to the poor, the poorer quarters of the city were cleaned. But in most city-areas the control of government was in the hands of a few old gentlemen who happened to have inherited or bought powers. They were clearly incompetent to undertake the new tasks; and their knowledge of other people's interests was thought to be inadequate. Therefore the system of

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city government was changed by the introduction of elected representatives; and the voters in Glasgow, for example, have been increased by a series of Acts from about 20,000 in the 1830's, when the city had about 200,000 inhabitants, to about 240,000 voters in 1914, when the city had about 700,000 inhabitants. By two Acts, of 1918 and 1928, an additional 446,000 persons were given votes. The proportion of voters therefore has risen from about 1 in 10 to less than 1 in 2; and the very recent introduction into political influence of nearly half a million new voters since 1918 in a population of just over a million indicates the immensity of the problem. Do any of these new voters understand citizenship? What could this new half of a million have learnt from the others who had voted before about the purposes for which votes should be used? The old theory implied that the voter was able to support his own interests; but how was he to discover what these interests were? What did he know of water-supply, or schools, or roads, or police, or about any subject on which his representatives would have to decide? Presumably, however, the voter knows when he is uncomfortable; and this at least can be made the ground for asking him his opinions. Meantime, again only since about 1870, a continually improving system of schools for all citizens has been in existence, creating an entirely new situation; but have the schools taught men and women to be citizens?

The other great change in the system of city

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government in the nineteenth century was the extension and amalgamation of the areas of local government. The area of Glasgow was about 1,860 acres a century ago; it is now 30,000 acres. The population in 1801 was 77,000; it is now 1,090,000. The Corporation has now about 34,000 permanent employees; and its total ordinary revenue is about £17,900,000. For the purpose of the argument about a community it is a most important fact that such large numbers of people living together should share in the burdens and benefits of city government. The extension of the area and the increase of the functions of the new city government mean that the common good of to-day is much more generally shared and much fuller of good things than any earlier civilization could imagine. We are, therefore, at the beginning of a new period in the development of public policy. Where then are we going?

## *A New Community*

The way forward can be most readily decided after an understanding of the direction we have so far followed and an estimate of the evils we have now to contend against in city life. The direction taken by nineteenth-century reforms has produced, almost by accident, a new social situation. The present situation was not planned, nor even foreseen, as a whole. Evils were cured by separate and sometimes unconnected methods. But public policy for education, health,

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and transport in the city has produced a new kind of man and woman in new kinds of relationship—that is to say, *a new community*. All the inhabitants of any city-area are more secure from certain evils than their forefathers were. Life has been extended and vitality during life increased. Also all citizens have at least an opportunity of expressing an opinion upon public policy. The new community accidentally produced is an immense new force. But perhaps hardly anyone yet sees what has happened in terms of new opportunity. The majority remain as unconscious of their powers as their forefathers were ignorant of the final result of the fight against infectious disease; and yet a new community of healthier and more intelligent men and women is a force as powerful as any electrical current.

No force, however, is likely to attract attention until a need for it is felt. If the situation is as good as it can be, we can afford to rest upon our grandfathers' laurels and praise them for having produced by their public policy such fine fellows as ourselves. But the situation is obviously not ideal. Life in the city is obstructed now, not by cholera, drunkenness, and street violence, as it was a century ago, but by overcrowding, privation due mainly to unemployment, and the misuse or disuse of productive power. Not all these evils can be overcome by the inhabitants of any one locality acting alone; but the city as one community has its part to play in the cure of its own evils. As it was with infectious disease a century ago,



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so to-day some believe existing evils to be inevitable or providential; and some suggest remedies as useless as prayer was for escaping cholera. But with the experience of the century behind us, we cannot assume that any evil is incurable, even if, as it was with our forefathers, we do not know all the facts which it may be necessary to know in order to solve the problem. The impatience of all active minds with the present system of city government by elected representatives and expert officials who follow a routine is due both to the knowledge that certain social evils are not overcome and to the feeling that our powers to build a new city are very much greater than those in office seem to believe.

The present situation, therefore, requires both a new view of the nature of the problem and, also, a new view of the forces which may be used to solve it. On the one hand, the evils of to-day all raise the one whole problem of the life of the community; and on the other, the force for destroying these evils is an actual life in common, immeasurably more powerful than that which our forefathers had at their disposal. Thus the central issue is not how many houses shall be built to the acre, or how much shall be given to the unemployed in "public assistance," but what sort of a city do we desire to live in. What sort of men and women do we desire to be and to have as neighbours? Obviously, men and women who do not suffer from disease; but for that provision is already made. Is it not also desirable that the city should be without

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privation and involuntary waste of good muscle and brains? The advances made during the past century in the removal of the greater diseases create opportunities for going further in the removal of other evils. The city which should exist is one whose common life is not merely secure from primitive infections, but is also healthy and vigorous in the use of all its powers.

The nature of the problem for public policy may best be expressed by the answer to the question: For whose good is the removal of privation or unemployment intended? It is easy to answer that it is for every one's good; or it may be said to be for the good of the whole community. But both these answers would be regarded by many as sentimental or meaningless; because the feeding of an unemployed man is not generally believed to be good for a successful financier, even if he lives next door. Another answer to another question, however, would have the same meaning. Suppose the problem to be, not the removal of an evil, but the establishment of a new and better situation—not, for example, the cure of cholera, but the provision of health by the supply of good water. Then the question, "For whose good?" means that someone will gain, not from the removal of the old evil, but from the creation of a new good; and the answer then must surely be that every one in the community would gain from the absence of privation or overcrowding, just as every one gains from decreasing the amount of infectious disease; because every one

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would gain from the increased use of every one's ability.

Thus, if we think in terms of evil endured, public policy seems to be of advantage only to those who now suffer. Or if others support a removal of evils, as when the rich support public assistance for the poor, the only advantage these rich seem to get is that small payments keep the poor quiet. If public policy aims only at the advantage of one side or the other, it irritates those whose interests are not considered. Policy conceived as the result of a balance of conflicting interests makes each "interest" eager to overbalance the other, and satisfies none. But policy conceived as an advantage for all can receive the enthusiastic support of anyone who understands it. The provision of a new water-supply, for example, is not then conceived as a means of "dishing" the claims of the poor, or punishing the complacency of the rich, but as a means for *making a new community*. The views of what should be done in any issue will still differ. Political parties will disagree. But each political party will then be conceived to aim, not at the separate interest of its supporters, but at the common good of the whole community; and it will be necessary for any party to show how any proposal on either side may be of advantage also to its opponents.

Can we, in practice, discuss public policy on such a basis? Clearly it is easier to excite men and women to oppose something or somebody than to rouse them for action in favour of anything new. Some people have

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no test of what is desirable except that it will injure those whom they dislike. The belief in hell was satisfactory to the virtuous. If they can be certain that somebody else will lose, some people feel that they themselves are likely to gain. Also some people would prefer to gain only a little, if others gained less, rather than to gain much if others gained as much. But jealousy and dislike are not the only passions of men in society, as some writers seem to imagine. There are also friendliness, carelessness of the success of others, and even enjoyment of other people's happiness. Which passions are dominant in any community at any time depends partly upon the influence of a few in key positions—upon writers in the newspapers and speakers on platforms. But it also depends upon the common sense and fellow-feeling of thousands of Nobodies. The problem is how to mobilize that common sense and fellow-feeling so that a new view of the gain to be derived from public policy becomes dominant—the view that the gain is not mine nor yours, but “ours.” That is to say, in order to put force into a public policy for the removal of the evils of an economic depression from a city, there must be a new understanding of what the city is. The evils against which policy contends must be felt to be injurious not to this or that person or group, but to the whole community of neighbours in the city. The common good, which is to be produced by public policy, must be felt to be something good for every one, as a member of a community.

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### *The Purpose of Public Policy*

A great city is formed not by the houses nor by the collection of inhabitants, but by the way in which these people live together. They have a common life at least in the sense that they maintain the same public services and share the use of these services. It is now generally understood that disease affects not only the victim, but his neighbour. We do not yet assume that the same is true of poverty, ignorance, and insecurity. But clearly the way in which people live together is deeply affected by the poverty, ignorance, and insecurity of some among them. Not only do such evils cause charges upon the public funds, but the whole community loses the vitality, intelligence, and friendly confidence which might exist if these evils were removed. Our problem, then, is not merely to make better roads, but better men, women, and children. The roads and the drains are useful only in so far as they make better persons. Thus poverty, ignorance, and insecurity in the city-areas are, for the early twentieth century, what cholera and typhus were for the early nineteenth. But we are more certain than our forefathers were of the dependence of each member of the community upon the welfare of the others, because we have learnt how the prevention of disease from which a few suffered has given a longer life to all. The way forward, therefore, is to make that life for all more excellent.

If that is the problem for public policy, what is the

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force that can be used for solving it? How can the community be made to throw off its present evils? Advocates of dictatorship say that it cannot be done if every one is expected to have an influence upon public policy. They say that the majority are incompetent to decide what is for their own benefit; and that therefore the few, who alone have a sense of the whole community, should control policy. Secondly, in order that this control should not be hampered, they say that no criticism of the rulers should be allowed. Thus in Glasgow, if dictatorship of the Right or of the Left were adopted, a select few would decide what houses ought to be built and for whom; and these few would be secured against all criticism coming from outside the circle of their professed supporters. So, it is said, the whole city would be improved. The difficulties of the plan are obvious. The first difficulty is the selection of the few who have, in fact, the sense of the common good. There is no proof that the particular few who happen to be able to seize power are the only few who have a genuine sense of common good; and the ability to seize power is no proof of the desire for a common good instead of a private advantage. The second difficulty is that, even if any particular few is genuinely filled with a sense of the common good, if they are not to hear other opinions, they are not likely to know enough to judge fairly of the common good of those who are not of their number. Criticism of those in authority should add

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to their knowledge, unless they are both infallible and omniscient.

Again, all forms of the common good are desirable for all the inhabitants of a city. It is not true that, although good water is good for manual workers, it is not good for manual workers to think freely about how to obtain it. It is good for all men to choose their own good. It is not good for any to have his good chosen for him; and it cannot be a common good that some should have no share in the responsibility for obtaining that good. Therefore the sharing of good by all must include the sharing of that good which is government. Dictatorship may make good drains, but it cannot make good citizens; for good citizens should all feel the common life as their own. The city would be uncivilized, however perfect its drains, if its inhabitants were presented with drains by their rulers and had no part in making them.

Again, as against Fascist dictatorships, those for whom good is desired should not be others helped by superior persons, but all. The community or the city is, in some sense, each person in it, who shares in the common good in his own right. No one should be merely an instrument of the good of others; each is part of the whole as an independent individual, not a "limb" of any "body politic," still less a tool for the wealth or culture he does not share. In a slave-society the majority were given "bread and circuses." They desired more and were put off with these substitutes; and then they were charged with



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liking nothing but what they were given! But now the common goods or services and the creation of them which is the task of city government should be shared by all.

But the objections to dictatorship are not excuses for acquiescence in the situation as it is, in countries of the democratic tradition. Clearly the advocates of dictatorship are right in saying that only a few in any city-area actually have a sense of the city as a whole. They are right also in supposing that the most important function of citizenship cannot be merely the voting for representatives. The traditional democratic theory of the nineteenth century implied a misreading of the facts in these two aspects. It implied that there was an equal appreciation of the common good among all citizens; and it implied that the interest of the majority could be maintained, if representatives and agents acted in behalf of the community. But neither of these implications is essential to the democratic ideal; and neither need be made the basis of a public policy for the creation of a new life in common.

## *The Spirit of Common Folk*

In the first place, if only a few have a genuine sense of the whole city, instead of taking over control they should add to their number. This and not dictatorship is the right method for making new men and women in a new common life. And there is, in the result of common services already established, enough

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actual life in common to be used as a force for making more. Therefore a conscious general appreciation of the facts of common life is the proper basis for action in common; the majority must be roused not to obey, but to acknowledge the dependence of the whole city upon what they themselves do and say and think. They should be induced to criticize, but should be made to understand that criticism implies the necessity of maintaining some purpose as the basis of criticism. For example, if the drains or water-supplies are bad, there must be some kind of life in common in the minds of those who desire to improve them. The democratic tradition may not need such continuous "propaganda" as dictatorship seems to require; but it does need some more adequate "publicity" than is traditional. The majority of the inhabitants of city-areas do not seem to know even that there are drains; and they act as if water from taps were in the nature of things and would continue to flow, whatever they think or do. They must learn to see more clearly what they are themselves doing to maintain the life of the city and to feel more deeply what they have not yet done.

Again, as against an exaggerated reliance upon representatives and officials, the democratic tradition has involved during the past century an increasing participation of common folk in the concerns of government. It was found necessary to use the election of representatives as a means of escaping from the control of the few who had inherited or

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bought power. But voting and election and the discussion of public issues before voting, which is better than voting, are only parts of the whole function of citizenship. The other parts were unconsciously preserved, in the British tradition, by the vague sense that the citizen should help the police and by the legal duty to serve occasionally on juries. But more definite and conscious action for the common good is now required on the part of all citizens. The life of the city, which has to be made by all citizens, is their own life, and should be felt by all to be so. That life cannot be safely left to the care of any representatives or officials.

What, then, is the positive policy in city government which is the alternative to dictatorship? It does not depend merely upon a list of reforms to be undertaken, or of grievances to be remedied. It is an enthusiastic understanding of what can be made of the city and of the part each citizen has to play in the making. The old principle of the nineteenth-century "democracy" was that each should share an existing good, and that each should be prevented from injuring others. The right to vote was conceived as a means of securing a share in a conflict of interests, and freedom was conceived as a well-defended backyard. But the new principle of twentieth-century democracy is that the creation of good to be shared requires deliberate social co-operation, and that freedom—so far from keeping men apart—is the increase of the ways in which each can help the other.

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Thus, in the first place, the common good for public policy is what is still to be created, and we aim not merely at making more drains or roads, but at the creation of a company of men and women who are to establish a new life in common. We do not pretend to know all the methods by which that life may be secured; but in the pursuit of that knowledge we are like our predecessors of the 1830's, who did not know what the city of to-day would be like. The chief difference between us and them is that they could assume the existence of traditional standards within which their reforms could operate; and we have the more difficult task of making a conscious effort to see the life of the city as one whole. We cannot any longer assume that "the nature of things" makes "lower" classes and "leisured" classes; for we know that these are the products of a vanished world, in which the life in common depended upon inherited and unexamined assumptions. But those assumptions are no longer generally accepted. The final purpose of public policy, therefore—the desirable life in common—must be fundamentally reconsidered, and a new kind imaginatively realized.

### *Improving the Democratic Tradition*

In the second place, twentieth-century democracy implies that the vote is not a means of self-protection, but only one among many possible signs of willingness to think and to work for a common good. The

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argument in favour of the widest possible extension of the franchise and of other forms of influence over public policy is not that each requires to be protected from others, but that each can contribute to the common good, not merely taxes or labour or military service, but also thought and emotion concerning the common good. The good produced under a dictatorship has not enough of the thought and emotion of common folk in it. Nineteenth-century "democracy," no doubt, exaggerated the importance of voting. It was cursed by representationism; and this is often an excuse for avoiding responsibility. One elects a "member," and then goes to sleep—hoping that the "member" does not do so too. Representatives have their uses; but no possible enthusiasm for the life of their city can be expected to arise among the youthful and the vigorous if citizenship is believed to consist mainly in voting at elections. If that is all "democracy" has to offer, the youth will march about in uniforms and feel that they are doing more. Clearly, there is more to be done for the city by all its citizens besides voting.

The citizen in twentieth-century democracy should work for his city—the city he is to build in the future, in private associations, in personal effort, in the promotion of some improvement of the actual city, and above all in civilizing the manners and customs which are traditional or current. A sensitiveness for the life of the city should be excited in schools, in theatres, in cinemas, and on the radio. And democracy

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should mean not "this is your share of the swag," nor "this is your troublesome duty," but "this is what you can do for your city, if you enjoy doing it."

All public affairs are public, as the drains are public, in the making and in the using. Government in all its forms, but most obviously in local government, is a means of bringing men together, not keeping them apart. It is not a "hindrance of hindrances," as if one person were naturally a nuisance to others; but a method of co-operation for the attainment of certain common goods. The force which is released in such co-operation lies hidden in all men, and therefore the city of the future—of men, not walls nor wealth—is now in existence in the desires and abilities of common folk. To bring that city out of the region where now it lies hidden is the first task of citizenship.

## CHAPTER III

### THE NATION

THE word Citizenship nowadays does not refer principally to cities, but to nations. Even the greatest cities are felt to be parts of a greater whole; and government or public policy in cities is obviously included within a larger system of government for the advantage of a more inclusive community. The question, "For whose good is public policy intended?" must therefore be answered, in reference to most of it, with the words "For the nation." The whole nation is assumed to derive benefit from all the activities of its central government, and no class or group would dare nowadays to say that the rest of the nation was merely an instrument for the advantage of a few.

#### *Conscious and Unconscious Life in Common*

In normal times the traditional sense of unity in a nation operates unconsciously. The maintenance of law depends chiefly upon the habitual loyalty to custom under the pressure of emotional currents below the surface of consciousness. The waves of conflicting interests on the surface of ordinary life do not destroy the sense of unity in the nation if the current of unconscious loyalty runs strongly enough. And the current is proved to be always available for use,



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because in crises it is applied to public policy, for the assistance of government in war or in an economic difficulty. If the avoidance of a common danger is a common good, that good is generally conceived to be shared by all the nation, in every nation. The cry that "the nation is in danger" is supposed to silence criticism of the Government and even to prevent any question about the responsibility for having brought the nation so far. In an emotional upheaval the danger can generally be believed to be caused by others, not ourselves. But who belongs to the nation? Clearly not those by whom it is endangered. These are "enemies." And therefore both an uncriticized dictatorship and a persecution of opponents can be based on a national appeal. Those who share the common good of the nation are, in that case, only those whom "we" choose to regard as belonging to the nation. The others clearly may be given what is good for them—training in silence and obedience to "us," for example; but they do not share the same kind of good as is shared by the true believers.

The history of the past fifty years is a rhythm in which the sense of unity in most nations rises to conscious enthusiasm and then falls to the level of unconscious habits, to rise again when circumstances change. It was admitted in the last chapter that some common goods could not be shared among the inhabitants of a city, unless they were also shared by others outside. In plain terms, road transport or the marketing of foodstuffs, and still more obviously

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therefore a common currency and credit system, must be shared by a larger unit. Policing and "defence" are also assumed to be shared, in the making and in their advantages, by the same large unit. The nation so united, in the present world, is a State; and the State is supposed sentimentally to be a nation, even when a State includes many races under the domination of one "nation." No one loves "the State." In order to maintain it, it is called "the nation"; and in that disguise it excites emotion. Sometimes, indeed, the emotion is filial or sexual. An analysis, for example, of the current attitude towards Britannia or John Bull, Columbia or Uncle Sam, would reveal political forces more powerful than the appetite for gain.

How, then, is the common good of a nation shared by all its members? Who gets or should get the advantages derived from the British Government or the Government of the United States? Presumably at least the citizens of Great Britain or the United States and their families; and presumably also all those should share equally in the advantages derived from their system of government. It is not usually supposed that "defence," for example, which is a national service, is more advantageous for one citizen rather than another. Law and police are common goods also equally shared; and so far as the State is concerned the currency system is not intended to be of greater advantage to any one person or group than to another. Some group which is not the whole nation may take advantage of the currency system or corrupt the

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police; but that is not what currency or police is *for*. Many goods are not equally shared; but all those goods provided by government are at least supposed to be.

On the national scale, however, as on the smaller scale of city government, the common goods made and shared exist in the midst of a tangle of conflicting interests. Perhaps it is inevitable that some interests should be in conflict; but the State, in any case, draws the line somewhere. Some ways of making an income are not permitted; and limits are set even to some legitimate powers of making incomes. Clearly, if one man is prevented from going too far, others have power to go further than they otherwise would; and for that reason government is traditionally conceived as a means of controlling "the other fellow." The advantage of that control can be explained in terms of income derived by each person through its operation. And if the mind of a whole community is dominated by the conception that each seeks mainly his own gain, then government seems to be worth maintaining in so far as it increases each person's gain. There is a cash value in company laws when they prevent frauds which one might not be clever enough to imagine or to carry out.

Government, then, seems to be a regrettable necessity so far as it controls "me"; but each person submits to it because on the whole it controls the "other fellow," and there are many "other fellows." This attitude was expressed long ago in a sort of

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philosophy—a bad philosophy—by Hobbes; but it is the dominant attitude in the world even to-day. The State, which we do not like but support against the other fellow, is felt to be quite distinct from the nation which we love in spite of the other fellow's sharing our love for it. In its function as assistance to my pursuit of gain, however, the State is conceived as specially useful against foreigners; and here "the other fellow" has two meanings. Each of us in any nation is felt to be taking what he can from the rest within that nation; but all of "us" are pulling together when the other fellow is a foreigner. The ship of State is a pirate ship; and the pirates do not quarrel among themselves when they see a possible victim on the horizon. National government is therefore normally thought to be of advantage to all its citizens in a rivalry with foreigners. Within the nation, therefore, is a single community, the most obvious examples can be found of the influences which have produced dictatorship and caused the most serious challenge to democracy. The conception of a struggle against rivals, within or outside one's frontier, is a natural basis for dictatorship.

## *The Experience of Life in Common*

The ship of State sometimes makes heavy weather; and then the common danger induces both the passengers and the crew to be more friendly. The anger may be objectionable; but the friendly feeling

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to which it gave rise is valued for its own sake. And when the danger is forgotten, a faint memory of that friendliness survives, creating a desire for common life in those who feel isolated when they struggle only for their own incomes.

The experience of the Great War and the Small Peace has had a similar effect upon thousands, perhaps millions, of men and women. The war itself may have been hateful; but in the war men and women felt themselves drawn together. Each had a part to play and, however small the part, the drama in which it was acted seemed great enough to exalt all the players. The vague feeling of loyalty sufficient for normal life became, in many minds during the war, a burning enthusiasm for a purpose, not their own gain. Millions obviously were compelled to take part and did so unwillingly; but even they were conscious of a life in common, more intense than they had ever known. This enjoyment of a common life was reflected in the influence of their parents' attitude upon the new generation during and soon after the war. But the need for common action seemed to pass away with the return to the normal hunt for an income. The new generation had been led to admire a common effort for a common good; and now they were told it was finished. But the sense of need for that satisfaction which had been found in common effort still remained. Men and women may have been glad to know that the war was ended; but they regretted something which they had had in the war—not merely a safe

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job or a "separation allowance." That something was a form of the life in common organized on a national scale and sustained by deep feelings.

That, as well as the uniform and the belief in "an enemy," is a survival of the war which has led to the establishment of dictatorship. Without the World War, its good as well as its evil, there would have been no party dictatorships calling themselves national or proletarian such as now exist. The lost souls in the returning peace longed for some life in common; and the dictatorships have supplied the crudest form of that life. But the Great War was not the only cause of the feeling of personal isolation when peace broke out. The social changes of the early twentieth century—the new position of women, the new freedom of children, the escape from sex conventions, the maldistribution of the increased products of industry—all helped to throw men and women out of their reckoning. The old stars and even the best compass seemed to be untrustworthy. Progress was no longer to be taken for granted. The "authorities" became apologetic and no longer certain of themselves. Youth was more consciously and on principle in revolt. But great numbers do not at all enjoy the opportunity of thinking and deciding for themselves. Parents may have been too strict in the old days and churches too rigid; but thousands feel that some strictness and some rigidity are necessary for them. And as the old authorities had almost abdicated and had actually collapsed in some cases, those who felt lonely in a

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shelterless world rushed into old holes or new sheds for company. This almost physical need for feeling safe has led to the revival of authoritarian discipline within most nations. Some conscious effort seemed to be needed to prevent "the nation" going to pieces.

The old game and in some cases the old players were restored after the war. No one seemed to know, for ten years after the war, that the old controversies were futile or that the issues were much more serious than the older politicians could understand; and in several new States the old fashions of nineteenth-century "democracy" were introduced as the latest available. Votes and representatives and the balance of parties advocating interests in conflict were the recognized characteristics of government in the countries which won the war. Free private enterprise within a self-limiting State seemed to be the only practical means of increasing wealth. The new constitutions were made by political thinkers who really believed in the devices of the nineteenth century and were generally unaware of the assumptions on which they rested. Some strange experiments, indeed, were being made in Russia; but the majority outside Russia believed that either the attempt to establish a new industrial system would fail or it would be unsuitable for imitation. And in any case the pre-war politicians who survived the war and still had influence in the first ten years of the peace really believed in voting and representationism and party balances which were supposed to be the whole of "democracy." Nothing



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had been learnt from the collapse of the European system in 1914, because that was generally supposed to be due to a few wicked people and not to the traditional anarchy of private greed within the State and gang loyalty controlling the relations between States. Therefore, the first tendency of those who felt lost in the new world was a harking back to the old system, in some cases disguised under new names.

The old system was at any rate emotionally supported by a traditional feeling for the nation; and that feeling was much more consciously understood than the vague sociability of neighbours in a city-area. The nation, in common speech, usually means a group of men, women, and children living in one vaguely conceived "country" and having the same language, the same moral standards, the same law and custom, and the same tradition embodied in a fairy-tale "history." But effective appeals to the unity of the nation usually depend upon the survival of a sort of mythology. Every "nation" is personified. Britannia and John Bull, Columbia and Uncle Sam, La France, and Deutschland are figures with exactly the same influence as Athena and Zeus and Mars in earlier days. Britannia is a mythological person, but not quite non-existent. She is ourselves, as we like to conceive ourselves, united with our friends. Hence also the peculiar use of the word "we" in political rhetoric. "We" are the nation, especially when "we" won the battle of Trafalgar or when a different "we" won at Bunker Hill or Austerlitz. Naturally also "we" are

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the best parts of us, our virtues, not our tendency to appropriate other people's property, nor any other defects, except in so far as they are grounds for kindly jokes or proofs that we are after all only human. It would be unkind to ask for too precise an explanation of what the average business man or agricultural labourer means by "England." It is more than enough that he is willing to die for it. At that stage it is generally "my country"—a vision and a sound—"Grey, uneven little fields, and small, ancient hedges . . . wild flowers, elms and beeches. . . . All this to the accompaniment of tunes heard long ago, an intolerable number of them being hymns."<sup>1</sup> That is "England." And if it is America or France that is "my country" the scenery and the sound are different; but the psychological reaction to an appeal in the name of "the nation" is the same.

It may seem, therefore, that in "the nation" there is enough emotional value and sense of common life to supply the force which is necessary in public policy. It may be imagined that in times of stress we can hark back to the traditional loyalties and the old cries. But alas! the myths are not strong enough. They fail, as the old belief in Athena or Zeus failed at the end of an earlier age. There is not enough clear meaning in the conception of "the nation" for use in anything but the very primitive emotional upheaval of a war. Too many common folk now know that anarchy in the relation between nations and limited economic

<sup>1</sup> Rupert Brooke, *Letters from America*, 1914.

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anarchy within each State is not exactly an earthly paradise. The "liberal" State has been overturned in some countries. Will it survive in the others? Can the "liberal" system of government which was never admired, except as a keeper of the prize-ring, satisfy the impatient desires of a new generation for a common life? That system was inserted a century ago into the prevailing struggle for incomes; but there was no conscious and deliberate reconstruction of the basis of the social tradition. Civilized life was assumed to require a division into leisured and working classes. Each reform was supported by an unconscious feeling that it was better not to fight one's neighbours; but no reform touched the deeper issues. Now, however, the very basis of the old tradition is questioned.

### *Need for a Conscious Common Life: the "New Deal"*

Therefore, in the nation as in the city, some conscious effort to remake society from its foundations must take the place of the old unconscious habits, if conflict is to be avoided. The issue affects all policy; but the economic crisis of the last five years makes the problem of economic policy most urgent. That problem is the relation of private conflicting interests to a common good.

The conscious effort actually made in the United States under President Roosevelt is the most interesting attempt to solve this problem within the conditions of an industrial society. It may serve here

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as an example. In Russia also there is a conscious effort to make a new society; but the circumstances there are almost mediaeval. An authoritarian tradition, an illiterate peasantry, little industrial production, and long practice of imprisonment and cruelty as means of stifling criticism—all these are conditions affecting government which have disappeared in Western Europe since the sixteenth century. But in America, Great Britain, France, and the Scandinavian and other small European States industrial production is a century old; even the countryside is industrialized; the great majority can read and write; and religion and education are no longer based upon beliefs in the infallibility of those in authority. In those conditions, what can be made of the nation? For reaching an answer to that question, more is likely to be learnt from America than from Russia.

President Roosevelt, when he came into power in March 1933, had to face the results of an economic collapse which had become more serious daily since 1929. A large number of banks had failed. The decline of the prices of agricultural products had seriously increased the burden of debt or mortgage-interest owed to the banks by farmers. Farm land had greatly decreased in value. The assets of many banks had completely disappeared, and some had closed their doors. The immediate crisis was likely to spread to the whole banking system, because so many of the banks were interdependent, although in the United States there was a larger proportion than elsewhere

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of local banks with small reserves and limited managerial ability. These local banks could be closed without much injury to the whole structure of credit. But the loss of confidence was affecting all banks. Therefore the President ordered that all banking should cease for a short time and assisted in the reorganization of the most important parts of the banking structure. Quick governmental action prevented a collapse of all confidence and complete chaos in industry. The State was clearly acting as the basis of ordinary manufacture, trading, and finance, although the myth still survived that government had only a limited use in a world of prevailing private enterprise. The keystone is not as heavy as the rest of the arch; but the economic system obviously depends upon the keystone, which is government, and it can be perceived so to depend when any new strain affects the arch. The number of stones in the arch, which stand for private enterprise, is so great that economists generally disregard the keystone because it is only one among many. But the keystone is the only essential in the arch.

The action of President Roosevelt in rescuing the banks, however, did not touch the chief causes of the crisis. Credit is of minor importance as compared with the actual production and consumption of goods. The credit system had suffered, because the productive system had been disorganized—that is to say, because those who made goods and offered services could get so very much less in exchange in other goods and

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services. Agricultural products could not be sold, even at a greatly reduced price, both because their production had rapidly increased and because the majority, who have low incomes, could not buy. They in turn could not buy because their products too had rapidly increased in quantity and had therefore been drastically reduced in price, and because the agriculturists, who needed the goods produced by others, were unable to pay enough for industrial goods. The effect upon ordinary social life was far-reaching. In some places school teachers were getting less than unskilled labourers; in other places their neighbours had to give them food. About a million children of school age were not at school because their schools were closed. Everywhere those with fixed incomes from investments cut down their expenditure; and lower profits in many firms made it necessary to reduce the number of workers or the salaries and wages paid.

The situation in the United States was an exaggerated form of the same situation as prevailed in all Western countries and in those Eastern countries which formed part of the industrial system. But booms and slumps have generally been more violent in the United States than elsewhere. The slump of 1933 was bad enough to induce the great majority there to support any action which seemed to provide a cure. But in addition to the actual crisis certain characteristics of the American people tended to give support to drastic action by the President.

In the United States, which is an expansion of

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European peoples under free skies, the pioneer spirit still survives. By contrast with most Europeans, Americans are much readier to face new issues in a new way. There is a certain sturdy reliance on themselves, which is expressed in their confidence in the future of America. Most European nations suffer from occasional fits of graveyard melancholy about "national decadence"; but in America even pessimism is jocose. The atmosphere is that of a pioneer's settlement, which may indeed have to move, but will then move forward to new lands. Secondly, in the United States there is almost anarchic individualism strangely combined with a quite genuine desire for "getting together." The business man is ruthless, but he will take lunch with his fellow Rotarians under a shower of moral platitudes. The moral feeling is genuine; and so is the reckless pursuit of gain. The two tendencies may be logically in contradiction, but they exist side by side in the same good American. And this is not hypocrisy. Kindly feeling is common, and there is a widespread willingness to help the other fellow; but anyone who does not need help must look to his pockets! The atmosphere in British, French, or German business circles is smokier and more stagnant; but it is in no way superior to the American. However, the comparison between nations is irrelevant for the present argument. The important aspect of the American situation, when the crisis came to be dealt with, was its amenability to appeals to both the pioneer spirit and the spirit of "getting together." Americans easily



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believed that common action was necessary without ceasing to believe that each ought to rely on himself.

## *The Appeal to "the Nation"*

In appealing to America the new President used the word "national." The "nation" was told that it must make an effort; and in the name of the "nation" those who secured riches amid prevailing distress were pilloried. The "New Deal" was a resurrection of "the Square Deal" of Theodore Roosevelt combined with "the New Freedom" of President Wilson; and the attention of the whole nation was focused, as in times of war, upon its central Government. The new policy was to have a double purpose. It was to provide not only for "recovery" but also for "reconstruction," because recovery alone might only replace every one in the position from which he had fallen, and another fall would follow. The President was using the crisis, not as an excuse for holding on the old course with shortened sail or slackened speed until the danger seemed to be over, but to press on more rapidly to new and calmer seas. Action, not "Going Slow," was the magic word in America. Not "sacrifice" but "playing your part" was the theme of the President's message; and clearly such a theme, implying that the command of the ship was not to be changed but its course altered, might offend two opposing groups. The opponents of the traditional system might say that it was merely a trick for preserving those who

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already had power; and the opponents of all drastic change might whisper "revolution" or even "Bolshevism." But the policy of the President can probably be expressed in the words of Professor Tugwell, one of his friends, who had written: "Liberals," whom he supported, "would like to rebuild the station while the trains are running; Radicals prefer to blow up the station and forgo service until the new structure is built." And again: "Reconstruction is about as difficult after a revolutionary debacle as it would have been in a process of gradual substitution."<sup>1</sup> This "gradual substitution" was to be achieved by three principal measures—the National Recovery Act and its Administration, the Agricultural Adjustment Act, and the Reconstruction Finance Corporation.

The description and historical account of this scheme of recovery and reconstruction can be found elsewhere. The argument here is concerned only with the question how far an appeal to "the nation" and the embodiment of that appeal in administrative acts can be as powerful in peace as it is in war. It is a question of the emotional force behind the word "nation" when it is used to express a common good contrasted with a conflict of private interests.

The agricultural plan included a restriction of the acreage under cultivation in order that the price of the farmer's goods might rise after the decrease of supply. But in practice many farmers grew more upon the restricted area than had been grown on the more

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in E. K. Lindley: *The Roosevelt Revolution* (1933), p. 306.

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extensive area hitherto. Thus the appetite for private gain was strong enough to counteract the "national" appeal; for each person concerned thought of the new situation established under the new Act mainly as an opportunity for getting the better of his fellows. Similarly, under the National Recovery Administration industrial codes were accepted or imposed upon certain sections of industry with a view to improving the conditions of labour and increasing the amount of small incomes; but in some cases the codes were evaded by certain enterprises within an industry, and in other cases there was a determined resistance to all governmental direction. Again, although some abuses, such as child labour, were removed, neither the trade unions nor the employers who maintained pseudo-unions among their own workers were satisfied that "the other side" was playing fair. Each suspected that the new situation was being used, not as an opportunity for common service, but as a new opening for the private gain of some person or group. The "national" appeal did not prove effectual enough. And finally, in the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, the influence of the traditional stockbrokers, moneylenders, and bankers was not very different after the appeal for a concerted use of capital had been made than it had been before. But the policy of making one economic plan for at least the more important sections of industry began to operate. The "national" appeal served at least to cover a new organization of trusts and monopolies.

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The appeal itself was a gallant attempt. It has not entirely failed; and whatever may be the later results of President Roosevelt's policy, some improvement seems to have been secured in the conditions of life for some low-paid workers. But the fundamental problem has not been solved. No way has been found so far for subordinating in business or finance the private and conflicting interests within a State to the common good of the whole nation. Some would conclude that the only way is the outright suppression of all private interests in industry and finance; but it is quite clear that the general attitude of most of the citizens of Western States does not make that a possible policy. On the other hand, it is quite impossible to reduce to insignificance the public control of certain aspects of production. The advocates of unrestricted private enterprise are living in a dream. Such a policy would lead immediately to social chaos and open civil war. The "nation" continues to be strong enough to prevent reckless private rivalry.

It seems likely, therefore, that the only practical policy is an increase of centralized "national" direction of a few crucial or fundamental elements in the industrial system, supported by a conscious sense of the common life which is shared by all members of a nation. The direction of fundamental forces in industry will be discussed later. Here the positive emotional force which may be used in support of such a policy must be considered.

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### *The Nation of the Future*

A conscious and deliberate making of a nation as a single community whose members share in the task depends partly upon the emotional force which can be made available for the common good, partly upon the practical plans for immediate action. The end in view is not "old England" but a "new" England, not the land of our fathers, even pilgrim fathers, but the land of our grandchildren. What emotional force can be put into action for such an end? It is easy to raise cheers for the "old" school, the "old" people, or the "old" country. These are felt to be part of ourselves; but for the majority the future has no definiteness of form or colour and is quite unconnected with them. Even to-morrow seems to be less part of ourselves than is yesterday; and next year is obviously an alien. But that is due to the retardation of the imagination in most men. Most men normally attempt to see or to feel the present in the terms of the past. The mind is always a little late in its race with the facts. An exceptional effort, therefore, is needed to get ahead of the facts at any moment, and to plan for what is likely to happen instead of what has already occurred. Even in warfare the majority of commanders seem to be unable to envisage a new form of attack by the enemy, although all indications point to its real nature. In military drill the old game of "preparing to receive cavalry" continued into the days of tanks and aeroplanes. But an effort is sometimes made to realize a

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new situation and new ways of dealing with it—ways not only of meeting new evils but of using new powers.

A nation, then, can have its attention turned to its future rather than its past. Competent leadership would do it in our present need; because there are already immense forces available for drastic social change. The health and education of the nation is much better and much more equally distributed than a century ago. The whole population, therefore, is much more easily affected by the same appeal. There is an incipient, consciously desired unity; not the traditional acquiescence in the position into which each person was born, but a unity of common and equal willingness to make a new way of living. Not only are a certain number of men and women ready to "sacrifice" something to a national purpose; but better still, millions are willing to work for that purpose in common, if they can be made to understand what it is. Great stores of generosity lie unused in common folk, because practical politicians can think of nothing but pleasing Mr. Smith and Mr. Brown as individuals by pretending to be getting something for them only. The other parts of Smith and Brown—not their appetite, but their energy and generosity in its use—are not normally appealed to.

## *The Nation in War and Peace*

The only "national" appeal which has been effectual in the past is that made in war; and it is significant

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that President Roosevelt and an ex-army officer, General Johnson, who acts for him use the metaphors of war oratory in order to excite enough emotion to support their policy. Traditionally and by positive training in schools the majority feel quite naturally that they may have to sacrifice small private gains in war-time in order to attain a common good. The common good is supposed to be "defence" or "peace" or "victory"; and every one understands that such goods are superior in importance to the adding of a little to profits or wages. Clearly, even in war-time there is selfishness and cynicism. Men are no more—indeed, probably less—virtuous in war-time than in peace, in spite of their professions. But in every nation the moral standard—the conscious and acknowledged ideal in war—requires that every citizen should do something to help the common cause; and for this reason the dictatorships have mobilized the war sentiment in order to promote unity among their followers. Whether the war is one against capitalist nations, as in Russia, or against any neighbours who have what the dictators want, as in Germany and Italy, war is the traditional stimulant of the sort of unity a dictatorship demands.

But the dictatorships have advanced a step further in using this war sentiment to support the promotion of work in common for a common purpose. Thus the young Communists in Russia, the young Nazis and Fascists in Germany and Italy, can be called upon to work on farms or in labour camps or on construc-



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tion. The purpose is a common good of the whole nation, not the profits of the entrepreneur, nor the wages and salaries of workers. This is called a "soldier's" spirit, because our civilization is so undeveloped that the soldier, not the doctor nor the nurse, is the recognized type of worker for a common good which is of more importance to him than his own pay.

The dictatorships are right in going beyond the war sentiment. The unity of a nation in making itself anew must be realized by work in common for a common good. But in the democratic tradition we should be able to go still further than the dictatorships. The ordinary work of peace-time should be given the honour and enthusiasm hitherto reserved for soldiering. The work of a railwayman or a postman or a textile worker should be recognized as ennobling, not as an imitation of the soldier's, but as an *alternative* to war service. The nation should be more closely united in peace than it is in war. The enthusiasms for the purposes of peace-time work should be greater than the enthusiasms for such primitive ends as "defence" or victory. The life of the nation in the present and in the future should be felt to consist in the ordinary work which makes civilized life possible for each of its members. But against the possibility of this devotion to a common life in work stands the old belief in anarchic individualism. The older men and women in our communities have been educated and have lived under the domination of a competitive

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struggle for private incomes. But the young could be delivered from that obsession. They could be quite reasonably taught to look for an adequate income without looking for only that. No fantastic altruism is necessary. Indeed, the attitude of most men and women who enjoy their work easily passes into devotion to a common good, in spite of the old belief in the excellence of greed. If that enjoyment in work could be assisted by a general recognition of the place of all good work in the making of the nation, then we should have national unity without dictatorship. What is wrong is not that men are mean and selfish, but that the traditional institutions imply the assumption that they are so, except in war; and no conscious effort is made to bring into play the other and more excellent tendencies of common folk.

The principle of national unity in the democratic tradition is voluntary co-operation carried as far as it can be—among as many and in as many different tasks as skilled use of persuasion can make it. This may involve coercion of recalcitrant minorities strong enough to make the voluntary co-operation of the rest ineffectual in achieving the end desired. But in any case and all the time it involves free criticism of the Government and of its policy and the full dissemination of any information, even if such information may provide evidence against the Government. It involves also the possibility of changing the Government, when the majority so decide—assuming the Government to be clever enough to assist the

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majority in making their decision! Thus we should have decision without dictatorship and a national policy whose advantages, being shared equally with the opponents of that policy within the nation, are truly national. We should have mobilized the generosity and willingness to help among ordinary men and women.

In addition to the problem of the force to be used, there is the problem of the method by which it may be made effectual. What institutional changes would be required to render the new sense of co-operation for a common good within a nation capable of improving the situation? How ought public policy to be carried out?

## *Defects in the Democratic Tradition*

The chief defects of the traditional policy in the democratic tradition are two: first, the scale on which policy is conceived is inadequate, and secondly, there is not enough common enthusiasm for the end proposed in peace-time by any Government to give success to an adequately radical or constructive policy. In the first place, the tradition survives that policy is the result of different pressures or influences working inside or outside the Representative Assembly upon the Government of the day. In practice this involves a continual adjustment or addition of items of policy to the programme of the Government, not in consideration of public need but owing to some lucky

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personal contacts or Press stunts. The old conception of democracy as a balance of interests brings a conflict of interests into the meetings of the Cabinet. One Minister happens to be strong-minded and resolute or reckless in his use of voices outside; and he has his way. Another Minister is slow-witted or muddle-headed; and his department with its policy is elbowed aside. A competent Prime Minister or President would no doubt adjust differences between Ministers, or harmonize policy in agriculture with policy in foreign trade. But in practice the problem is not to be solved by merely personal competence. It is a problem concerning the institutions of government. Unless the policy of a Government is conceived as one whole, the parts cannot be harmonized. Each part will be merely lopped into any shape that will pass muster.

Public policy, conceived as one whole, must include measures dealing with health, education, transport, and other services as well as police, "defence," and finance. But the traditional policies in these matters are unconnected. Each is based upon almost exclusive attention to one or other aspect of national life alone; and, since the economic obsessions of recent years, policy in such matters as education and health is conceived mainly in terms of financial cost. Economists, who are students of exchange values or, at best, of industrial production, are without any competence as guides either on social services or on foreign policy. But ever since the great controversies on tariffs of fifty years ago political discussion has

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been drawn chiefly from text-books of economics. The alternative is a definite and detailed conception of the kind of nation we desire to produce in twenty or thirty years in all aspects of social life. A mere list of evils to be amended or of "interests" to be promoted will not be enough. A Government with any approach to an understanding of the issues now at stake must be able to "put over" a dominating conception of a comprehensive programme of national recovery and reconstruction. Above all, it must not yield to the temptation of obscuring thought by emotional appeals to the "nation" without having done the preliminary work of explaining who precisely is meant by "the nation."

The central purpose of such policy, the nation that is to be, differs from the nation of the past in the more equal sharing among all its members, by right of each and not as a charity, of all the benefits of the nation's work. This will be discussed more adequately in the following chapters, where the question will be not "For whose good?" but "What sort of good should public policy produce?" Here it is necessary only to note that the common good of the whole nation in the future is not anything so vague as "national honour" or "national welfare," but a share in food and clothing and leisure for all and a share also for all in the work of producing such things. We lack the enthusiasm for work in common, partly because the purpose is not clearly or "concretely" imagined; but partly also because we still depend upon an obsolete

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mythology of nationalism. We should by now be able to "see through" Britannia and Uncle Sam. Whatever their ambiguous relationship, they become merely ghosts unless we think first of the actual men, women, and children—most of them poor and simple, but willing enough to help—who are the "nation" to-day and who alone can make a nation of to-morrow that is worth our devotion. This nation of common folk at work in the maintenance and progress of civilized life is all of "us" at our best.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE FAMILY OF NATIONS

EACH of the Governments of the world is conceived by its own citizens as the instrument of their own welfare; and, as it has been argued above, the greatest common enthusiasm for that welfare arises when the nation is in danger. But this danger is usually conceived to be due to foreigners; for, even if civil war is threatened, one side or the other appeals to "the nation" and thereby makes the other side appear to be foreign. Common goods are not conceived to be shared with anyone on the other side of a frontier; and therefore positively as well as negatively each Government is believed to be morally responsible only for the interests of its own citizens or subjects. Political responsibility—the fact that officials or representatives have to account for their acts—is assumed to mean subordination of a Government to the people of one nation or commonwealth; for no Government, it is conceived, ought to owe its power to foreign support; and if it does, it is regarded as not working for the advantage of its own country. The belief that the interest or the common good of one nation is fundamentally different from and often actually opposed to the common good of any other—this belief, perhaps unconsciously, underlies the theory and practice of State sovereignty.



## *The Challenge to Democracy*

### *Governments as Rival Traders*

The Governments of the world, like the Governments of cities, are surrounded by the jungle of private efforts for private gain; but in the relation between Governments the jungle seems to leave no clearing at all in which the common good of all peoples can prevail. Government in city-areas and even on a national scale is believed nowadays to be at least a limitation of the struggle for gain or to aim at common goods in the midst of the struggle of each against all, for whatever income each can get. But in the contact between nations or States, every one seems to believe that Governments are not correctives but actually agents of competitive efforts for income. Thus one Government promotes against the other the trade of its own citizens. Some Governments act as trade-agents and collectors of debts for their financiers, through their diplomats and sometimes by the use of their armed forces. And at economic conferences, by contrast with health conferences, the Governments appear as rivals, using as their weapons, besides veiled threats of armed force, such economic measures as tariffs, prohibitions, and currency manipulation. We speak of trade "wars" and of the struggle for markets, in which markets are "captured," as if the chief reason for selling our goods abroad were victory over someone else. And many writers in newspapers seem to believe that foreigners do an injury to "us," if they sell goods to "us" cheaply, not distinguishing the

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"us" who are helped by the cheapness from the "us" who may possibly lose customers. The nation, for purposes of import and export, is conceived to be one. And this economic mythology is maintained by the statistics of "trade returns" provided by Governments. It would be equally possible to give statistics of the imports and exports of Sussex or New Jersey; but clearly that would not prove either of these to be a single economic unit in rivalry with others. However, "the balance of trade" is an article of the current political creed in most nations; and the distinctions between different currencies seem to confirm the belief that "nations" are distinct economic units in competition. Thus the State, which promotes an order within the frontiers superior to the conflicting interests of persons or groups, makes the conflict of interests between those inside and outside its borders actually worse than they would be otherwise.

Finally, all existing sovereign Governments have grown up as concentrations of power into one centre within a certain circumference which is now marked by the national frontier. And therefore the "natural" characteristic of any national Government seems to be its separateness from any other such Government. The increasing connections between Governments are regarded generally as unessential additions. The character of the State, in most political treatises and all current belief, is supposed to be determined by its relation to its own citizens, not by its relation to the citizens of other States; and therefore the whole

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field of relations between States, nations, and peoples seems to have no common good of all within it.

The traditional answer to the question "For whose good?" in reference to the action of a Government, as was indicated above, is "For the good of a nation." And this excludes others as well as including all within the nation. So far it has been assumed that the good aimed at is rightly shared by all within the nation; but now it must be shown that the traditional exclusion of others is wrong. The British Government, for example, must be conceived to be acting not only for the good of British citizens but also for the advantage of the citizens of France, Germany, and other States. Those who ought to share the common good attained by any Government are all peoples in all nations. Any State is only a part of the State system; and any Government is only one among many instruments for the common good of the citizens and subjects of all. But to make this conception of government intelligible and yet not Utopian may require an effort of imagination. Such imagination is required, not only to conceive what ought to be done, but also to see in an unconventional light what is actually happening; for in many aspects of national policy each Government is in practice already working for the advantage of others besides its own citizens. Indeed in the modern world it is impossible for any Government to attain for its citizens the kind of life they desire without helping the citizens of other Governments to attain the goods they need.

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### *States in Opposition*

Thus there are two distinguishable aspects of the existing situation and two opposing views of what ought to be the relation between peoples. Some of the facts of the present situation undoubtedly support the traditional idea that each Government works against foreigners. Every Government is preparing what is called "defence"; and although no Government would attack or be "aggressive," the "defence" of each is clearly directed against the "defence" of the other. From this point of view it is an advantage to one Government or nation if the "defences" of the other are reduced. The Peace Treaties of 1919 and the following year were designed to give this advantage to the victors in the Great War by disarming the defeated. In the mythology of politics, clearly, no victor admits that he is reducing other nations' "defences." They are called for this purpose "means of aggression." It is seriously believed by the majority in each nation that no other nation requires "defences" against their armaments; and, therefore, if another nation is provided with what for "us" would be "defences" it must clearly be for some sinister purpose! The French Government, for example, since 1919 has never admitted that the Versailles Treaty reduced Germany's "defences," because Germany could not need "defences" if France never attacks but only defends herself. In any case, in practice each Government aims at reducing the other's "defences," even at a dis-

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armament conference; and if that cannot be contrived each Government then aims at increasing its own defences against the other. Clearly, so far as "defence" policy is a guide, each Government works against the interests of the others, and there is no common interest of all the citizens of all nations.

This hostility of one Government to another is supported and extended by the private manufacture of armaments. If there are private armament firms within the jurisdiction of any Government, they are treated as parts of the system of national defence. They form a reserve of manufacturing capacity, necessary for modern wars, which it would be too expensive to maintain out of State funds in peace-time. But these private armament firms cannot be kept in readiness unless they are allowed to manufacture for foreign Governments while their own Government's orders do not absorb their whole capacity. Thus each Government which has private traders in arms within its jurisdiction positively supports their efforts to obtain orders abroad, even from "possible enemies." And besides, smaller Governments, which have no private armament manufacturers in their own countries, support the larger Governments' friendliness to the armaments trade; because this trade is the source of their supply. In general, therefore, all Governments are in favour of the private armaments trade; for even the Russian Government, which organizes through the State only the manufacture of arms within

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Russia, depends for some of its supplies for war on the private manufacturers abroad.

The private traders in armaments obtain orders from any country by fulfilling orders for its neighbours. The more armament one State has, the more the others acquire. In theory the process is intended to make peace secure by frightening every nation lest its arms may not be enough to overcome other nations. This is the absurd belief embodied in the phrase—"Prepare for war, if you desire peace." It is supposed that every one's neighbours hesitate to attack only because they are afraid of the arms of every one else; and this assumes that States are fundamentally robber-bands, restrained only by a wholesome fear of not being strong enough to rob as they would like to do. Undoubtedly this belief is widespread. It is expressed in diplomacy and foreign policy; which do indeed, therefore, prove that every State, in this aspect, works against all other States, for the advantage of its own citizens only.

### *The State-system*

On the other hand, at least since a century ago, the relations between States have been greatly changed, in agreement with the change in the character of the State in domestic issues. Since the 1830's the State has organized for its own citizens the improvement of conditions of labour in industry, public health, and education. Before that date the functions of the State

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were almost entirely police functions—the maintenance of law and order; and the chief expression of those functions was force. Law itself was conceived as a command of a superior having authority, made effectual by force and the threat of force. It was implied that no one would do what he ought, unless he was forced or threatened. Since the introduction of State organization for health and education, however, it has been obvious that in these functions at least the State is a form of service, not a superior force. Most of the laws passed in democratic assemblies have been agreements to establish new forms of social organization, not commands nor prohibitions. And thus a new conception of law itself is developing, on the assumption that most men want to do what they ought to do. Law and government, as it has been argued in the preceding chapters, have become, at least in part, ways of enabling individual citizens to act in concert, as they naturally desire. And the same kind of change has occurred in the relation between the citizens of different States. It was found that no State could provide health and education for its own people unless it co-operated with other States. Epidemic disease required international co-operation for its cure and prevention; and therefore every civilized State came to depend on assistance from other States in its efforts to improve the health and knowledge of its own citizens. Here, then, is a sign of another aspect of the relation between States: for in carrying letters or reporting on epidemics the



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Government of Great Britain, for example, actually works for the good of the people of France and Germany. And in very general terms it can be said that even the maintenance of order within its borders by any State is an advantage to the peoples outside those borders. It is indeed natural to any modern State to help other States. It is a survival from the past, if any State to-day prepares war against any other.

### *The Gospel of War*

But of the two aspects of the State in its external relations—that of warlike rivalry and that of civilized co-operation—clearly the warlike aspect is still dominant. Most politicians have been to school at an earlier time, when the new ideas had not reached the text-books; and most men and women do not think at all of their relation to foreigners, thereby leaving their minds empty to the seven devils of newspaper stunts and political rhetoric. Clearly, if there is a family of nations it is not a happy family. If any members of the family love one another the chief reason seems to be that they agree to hate some third. If there is no war actually going on it seems to be chiefly because possible enemies are not yet fully prepared; for what is called “peace” is nowadays used as an opportunity for accumulating material for war. The unity of each nation is thus attained by a system which deliberately destroys any effort at unity across frontiers. The common good of each nation

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is not conceived as a part of the common good of all nations, but as directly opposed to the common good of other nations.

This simple and primitive creed has now become the gospel of Fascist dictatorships. It is the result of ignorance of what makes civilization and culture possible in any nation, of false history and unreasonable passions. But even when it is not the official gospel, in countries still free from dictatorship, it is too commonly believed. Most of those who advocate "democracy" do not see that their principles should affect the relations between Governments as well as the relation of any Government to its own citizens. They adopt in international affairs the principles of their opponents. A definite opposition, therefore, to the whole of the primitive tradition of hostility between nations must be made. Over against the ideal of Fascist Nationalism, the democratic tradition should put the new patriotism of devotion to a common civilization whose instruments are the Governments. One's own country, then, is most worthy to be served when it serves what is best in itself—namely the civilization and culture which it shares with all others. This is a new patriotism. The new patriotism is not love for everything that has a national colour, but only for those aspects of one's own national life which make it civilized. The new patriotism would feel shame at persecution or the suppression of spontaneous thought by one's own Government, precisely because it would feel pride in what that Government

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did well and confidence in the effort of one's own fellow-citizens to direct their Government in the right way.

### *A New Conception of Peace*

But if something better than Fascist Nationalism is desired, it by no means follows that the old conception of peace is valid. It is no longer possible to maintain the attitude of nineteenth-century "democracy" towards the relation between States or peoples. In those earlier days it was still believed that peace was isolation or non-interference. The conception of self-determination was the last phase of isolationism—good in so far as it implied that each nation should be responsible for its own action; bad in so far as it excused carelessness about the effect of one's own Government's action upon other nations. No nation has any right to repudiate responsibility for what goes on outside its frontiers, as a result of the relations between States or Governments. Self-determination cannot mean self-sufficiency. The States of the world are not separable units: they are all parts of one State-system. The Fascist dictators, with their policy of national segregation, only maintain the most obsolete peculiarity of nineteenth-century "liberal" democracy—isolationism. They are not advanced, but retrograde in their foreign policies. They are not "realists"; they are obsessed with dreams of a dead past.

But the alternative is not a vague sentiment of

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friendliness for foreigners. The alternative should be a definite and detailed policy, covering the relations between Governments. In the most general terms, it is the policy by which each Government promotes those goods which are common to the peoples of several or of all States. The first such common good is the avoidance of violence. It "pays" all nations to avoid violence, even those nations which might hope for gain from violence. Therefore each Government ought to bind itself never to use war at all, in its own behalf and on its own judgment of its rights. This may seem to have been already promised in the Kellogg Pact. But, unfortunately, authoritative interpretations of that pact seem to imply that, in the case of "defence," each Government may use war if in its own judgment it should so use it. This is not the right of defence but the right of deciding when defence is required; and no party to a dispute has any such right. No person nor group of persons is morally justified in assuming, without consideration of the opinion of others, that the moral judgment of that one person or group gives the final decision in a conflict of claims to rights. No man is judge in his own case against others. If he is compelled to "defend" himself against what he believes to be a danger, he should do so only on the ground that he can prove to a competent authority afterwards that, in other people's judgment, his action was really "defence." And so any Government may take action in an emergency; but it is morally bound afterwards to prove before an impartial tribunal

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that there was an emergency and that its action was limited to the needs of that emergency. This, however, has by no means been made clear by the Kellogg or any other pact. The chief Governments, supported by their peoples, still refuse to submit all their disputes to judicial procedure and the judgment of "third" parties. We do not yet really grasp what is implied in the statement that "peace" or the avoidance of violence is a common good. We still think of peace as something that each nation can have for itself alone.

This is proved by the maintenance of national defence forces. A national defence force can secure "peace" for those whom it defends. The "peace" it secures is a private peace—peace in a corner, peace for "us," not for others. But that is not peace at all, if peace is a common good. The prevention of violence is good not only for the man who may be attacked but also for all the others who are going about their business. What is needed, therefore, is not the protection of one nation against another, but the preservation of a system in which, first, common interests can be pursued by co-operation between Governments and, secondly, if any interests are opposed the disputes which may arise out of that opposition are settled without recourse to violence. But that system includes many States, if not all; and the maintenance of that system, not "defence," is the only just ground for the use of force by the Governments. This principle is embodied in the Covenant of the League of Nations;

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but it is not yet operative in practice. If any war is undertaken in violation of the Covenant, the members of the League are bound to act together in reference to it and, under certain conditions, to use their armed forces jointly. Thus it is admitted in words but not commonly recognized in practice that any war is an offence against *all* the peoples of the world; and that all should prevent the appeal to force.

### *The Policy of Peace*

The major problem of policy, however, is not how to act in an emergency or in case war should break out, but how to prevent the emergency arising in which war might break out. A peace policy is a policy for preventing war, not a policy of choice between different kinds of war. A "League" war or a "war to end war," if it occurred, would be a confession of failure to prevent war. One kind of war may be better than another; but the chief aim of policy should be to prevent all war, even another "war to end war"! This aim can be achieved only when there are alternative methods available and accepted generally for attaining what Governments usually seek by war, in so far as that is legitimate and morally right. Some purposes, such as conquest or subjugation of new territories or peoples, should not be attained by any method whatever; and in so far as war attains these war is altogether evil. But some purposes, such as the recognition of a new situation, not allowed for in

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existing treaties, may be quite legitimate; and if they are pursued by means of force, that is not an argument against the purpose itself, but only against the means. Thus adjustment of international relations, which has hitherto been the result of war, should be the result of judicial process of some kind and not of war. The policy of peace is the substitution in practice of methods of judicial procedure for *all* claims to rights.

But, apart from substitutes for war, there is an urgent need for prevention of any attempt at using force while the new system is being developed. There are two methods proposed for preventing such a resort to war, methods which are not indeed opposed, but are supported for slightly different reasons. One method is called "Sanctions"; the other is the control of the arms trade and restriction of the accumulation of war-material. The advocates of "Sanctions" generally accept the point of view of French and Czechoslovak politicians of the Right, which implies that no reduction of armaments is possible for any nation unless all other nations promise to assist each in "defence" against any possible aggressors. In theory a world in which all States had only small forces would be also a world in which each was bound to assist any victim State when another State unjustifiably attacked it. But it is not by any means clear that any one of the Great Powers is willing to reduce its armaments to a level which would make assistance necessary for its defence. The amount of assistance promised is presumably to be proportionate to the



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amount of the increase of danger due to reduction of armaments. But if all States simultaneously reduce their armaments in an agreed proportion, no State after the reduction would be in any greater danger than it was before. There are other difficulties, more impolite to the French General Staff, which may be urged against a rigid plan for assisting any particular Government, while all Governments promote the arms trade, maintain spying and obstruct the trade of other nations. For example, it may be asked, "How far can any Government go in injuring another nation, and yet charge that other nation with 'aggression' if it goes to war?" In any case the "Sanctions" plan for preventing war is only the old method of threatening, as a means of restraining possible evildoers; and threats are not reliable methods of government or instruments of policy.

But the second plan for preventing war relies upon decreasing the likelihood of an appeal to arms. That is to say, it depends, not upon threatening evil consequences when war has actually broken out or is on the point of breaking out, but upon restraining the tendencies to war. This policy involves, first and without any promises, an agreed reduction of armaments at least among the Great Powers and larger States. This should be accompanied by an international control of the private trade in armaments; and finally there should be a similar control of the chief materials for making armaments—the rare metals, tungsten and nickel. The general purpose of this policy is to

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decrease both the ability of any nation to attack another and the sinister influence of the private trade in arms. No Government is likely to appeal to force unless it has a large supply of armaments, as well as material and manufacturing capacity for obtaining more. Small States are less likely to go to war if there is not pressure upon their politicians exerted by the agents of armament firms in their search for markets. The policy of obstructing these tendencies to war is by no means a security against war; but it would reduce the likelihood of war. Above all it would test the honesty and ability of the chief Governments: because if they are unable or unwilling to do even this they are clearly not to be believed when they say that they are in favour of peace. A collective control of the arms trade and of the materials for war is much less difficult to secure than any collective "sanctions"; and if the Governments will not even prevent the preparation for war they are not likely to act together when war breaks out. Indeed, to promise "sanctions" or "guarantees," while doing nothing to reduce the preparations for war, is like giving a man a weapon and then threatening to punish him if he uses it.

## *The Collective System*

But the real force of a new policy would operate not only with respect to the danger of violence. This is not the place to discuss the various aspects of a diplomacy of peace which might be substituted for the

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traditional methods of veiled threat. But the general principle can be expressed. The fundamental difference between the new method and the old is that the new method is "collective" or co-operative. Every State is assumed to be a part in a single system for maintaining the peace of the world and increasing its prosperity. All diplomatic action for preventing war is assumed to be the co-operation between many Governments, and peace is conceived to be the positive promotion, through government, of all forms of intercourse across frontiers which improve civilized life. The State, in its relation with other States, is assumed to be an instrument for bringing the peoples together in the pursuit of common goods, and not a means of keeping them apart for the avoidance of danger. Diplomacy and the League system are thus essential parts of modern government. Their defects are inheritances from the past: their advantages are opportunities for the future. And it is the duty of each people or nation, through its own Government, to assist all other peoples in the attainment of such common goods as health, wealth, and happiness, from which all should derive advantage. Also, as in the more limited area of city or national government, so in the international policy of a modern State, the good aimed at should be conceived not as a fixed amount to be divided, but as a future result of co-operative action. The peace and prosperity which is the right purpose of public policy in international affairs have still to be created. It is premature to speak

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of the maintenance of peace: in its real meaning "peace" has still to be made.

### *The Common Good of All Peoples*

But the diplomacy of peace, the provision of substitutes for war and the prevention of preparations for war—all depend upon a new and intelligent enthusiasm for a social order or governmental system in which the common good of all peoples is envisaged as the purpose of policy. Fascist Nationalism is an enthusiastic creed. It must be opposed with equal enthusiasm for a loftier, more realistic, and more intelligent belief in the common good of all nations; so that the people of each nation expect and require that their own Government shall help all other nations. Civilization now requires the growth of a sense of community including not merely the members of one's own city or nation but also all other human beings. The sense of that community and of the common goods shared by its members should be vigorous enough to sweep out of existence the pitiful provincialism and village-pump politics of the Nazis and Fascists. It is not enough that a few should grasp intellectually the need for communication across frontiers, if science and the arts and the basic supplies for civilized life are to develop. An acceptance of a theory is not enough. What is needed is vigorous and even violent emotion; and a practical devotion of the energies of youth to the making of a

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world in which peace is secure because all peoples are too busy working for what all desire, to prepare for war.

The hesitation to go to war still survives from the bitter experience of the Great War. Not merely the memory of the deaths of one's friends, not merely wounds and disablement nor a distaste for the brutalities of the battlefield, but a very widespread sense of disillusion exists among common folk. Even bellicose rhetoricians, such as Mussolini and Goering, know that the enthusiasm for sitting in trenches or jabbing other men with bayonets is not very common; and therefore whenever they praise war they make another speech praising peace. The suspicion of all traditional cries in war such as "king and country" and "the nation in danger" is a hindrance to warlike or bad-tempered politicians. A healthy scepticism of the competence of generals, admirals, and bellicose newspaper men is spreading with the improvement in education. But these are merely negative protections against war.

We need more than these. We need a conviction among the majority of ordinary folk in all nations that what they want can be obtained only in common with the ordinary folk of other nations. The Englishman should think of the Frenchman or the German not as a possible enemy but as someone who needs his help and someone whose help may be needed. The problem of policy then would be not how to keep each out of the other's way but how to bring all men

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together for more effectual co-operation in the pursuit of common goods. Government or the State will then be understood to be an instrument for close contact with foreign peoples, not a defence against them; and it will be regarded as an objection against any politician that he should propose measures injurious to the common folk in other lands.

It is said that the Chinese believe that "if all is well in the family, all is well with the State" and that the civil wars in China have been the result of this small-scale thinking, because the relations between even the best of families cannot be left to chance or unconscious habit. Similarly in the West, it seems to be believed that "if all is well with the State, all is well with the world." But this too is small-scale thinking. We have left to chance or unconscious habit the relations between States; and the result is anarchy and war which—for Europe—has been as clearly a civil war as any in China. Our rival "Tuchuns" have made money and power for themselves because we have no dominant conception of the Family of Nations. Each nation treats itself as a world apart. And the results of not facing the facts are worse than any result of utopianism could possibly be.

The circles of common life surround each man's home at different distances. Nearest to him are his friends and relations and they are felt to be part of his neighbourhood. As it has been argued above, the unconscious acceptance of the advantages of neighbourhood, for example, in a city-area requires now to

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be transformed into the conscious support of a life in common. Secondly, surrounding and including the city is the nation organized as a sovereign State or Federation. That common life is more consciously supported, especially in the emergency of war: and here therefore we require a transformation of the type of support enthusiastically given, from a mere defence in war to a making of the nation in its ordinary life of service for daily needs. But, thirdly, the circle of common life includes an outer fringe of relationship to the citizens of other States. The relationship already exists; but it hardly affects public policy and it is not consciously present to the minds of the majority in any State. At no time will the relations of men across the frontiers of States be so easily imagined and so deeply felt as the relations in the face-to-face community of neighbourhood. Anyone who feels his community with foreigners as deeply as he feels his community with his neighbours in the same street is either abnormal or is a sentimentalist who has no deep feeling for any actual person. But although the community of men of all nations is secondary and dependent upon one's knowledge of ordinary folk at home, even that more distant community can be made the basis of policy. That community must be made emotionally present to the minds of the new generation, not only as a fact worth acknowledgment, but as the source of a new world of intercourse and co-operation. Indeed, only on this large scale of world-wide relationships is it possible to construct a



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civilized life at last secure from the recurrent relapses into barbarism which have hitherto been the curse of humanity. The first of all common goods is peace: and that, in the modern world, no man can have unless all have it.

## CHAPTER V

### HEALTH

AFTER deciding who should derive advantage from public policy it is necessary to decide what sort of advantage should be aimed at. A vague feeling that "welfare" is desirable would not help in administration; and, as it was argued above, the old feeling that all will be well for every one, if the traditional system is secure, is no longer strong enough to prevent violent conflict. The problem of the purpose or aim implied in traditional custom still remains open, even if we are making the best of the conditions into which we have been born; for why should we not change those conditions? But if we should change them, what is desirable that they do not provide? Clearly in order to answer that question we must pass beyond a mere list of grievances.

Among commentators on the authorities, it is usual to find the phrase "the good life" used as the name for the final aim of public policy. But that phrase, besides being even more indefinite than "welfare," is still affected by the assumptions attached to it in the slave-civilization known to Plato and Aristotle. Is it conceivable that it should be the aim of public policy to maintain the slavery of many for "the good life" of a few? Is it conceivable that anyone could have a "good" life in a community in which the majority

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are slaves? Indeed, the traditional phrase has been an excuse for blindness to facts. At its worst, it has meant that public policy should be such as to satisfy anyone who has the capacity for "feeling good"—in the American sense—in any circumstances. The good life, in such a sense, includes sitting in trenches in a war; because a virtuous man may do it. The "good life" of an Athenian slave-owner or an eighteenth-century gentleman is not good enough for us.

Indeed, better than more learned phrases as a description of the aim of policy is the old phrase—health, wealth, and happiness. The first two of these three words at least are definite enough in their common meanings. And in practice they cover the actual purposes of administration in the modern State-system. Let it be supposed, then, that public policy should aim at these common goods—(1) health, physical and mental, for all; (2) the use of the exchangeable goods and services necessary for the vitality and enjoyment of each; and (3) that spontaneity in work and play and the avoidance of obstructive persons and events which the ordinary man means by the word "happiness." Such good things are obtainable in the life of man among his fellows only by the creation of institutions and their use in policy. But as circumstances inevitably change, these common goods cannot be obtained by leaving social conditions as they are and making those in power or anyone else virtuous. Not even increased

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virtue in the driver will make a farm-cart go as fast as a motor-car. Different common goods need specific institutions and policies for their attainment. It should be obvious, but it has not always been obvious, that virtue in the form of "good will" or "love for your neighbours" will not make a feudal system do the work of modern industry. Ruskin and other reformers suffered badly from the illusion that if men were more virtuous all would be well. Clearly, more virtue may be necessary. Even a good institution can be misused by a person with evil intentions. But the problems of the common good, what it is and how to get it, are not problems that can be solved by exhortation. Their solution requires thinking; and the form of the solution will clearly be some kind of change in daily habits and customs, embodied in new institutions. That is the lesson to be drawn from the efforts to improve health in city-areas during the nineteenth century. Cholera disappeared, not because people became more virtuous, but because new sources of water-supply were made available. What institutions and what policy, then, are now needed to obtain the first of our common goods—health? We have a certain amount of it; but we should have more.

### *Health as a Common Good*

No one disputes that health is good; but in some countries in some circles it is apparently still believed that it is a "private" good or that one can have it

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without public organization. In France, for example, the mediaeval conception survives that it is an interference with liberty to compel the members of a local community to maintain and use a common water-supply. It may be worth while, therefore, to remind ourselves in what sense health is not only a good but also a common good: for it was not so conceived and it was not, therefore, a purpose of public policy in the days of the great writers on government and the State, from Plato to Hegel. In the most general terms the other fellow's health is of advantage to each of us, first because of infection. People living in close contact must concern themselves, each with the other's health, because any personal contact may endanger health. On the other hand, the good health obtained by each is a good shared with the others in so far as each depends upon the vitality of the others for services. In that sense also health is a common good, although at first sight nothing seems more personal and individual than health. The danger of disease is more obvious than the gain each derives from the health of others. But this second aspect of the social situation shows that health is a common good in a much more important sense: for wherever one man depends for food or clothing or leisure upon the work of others, each derives gain of all kinds from the other's ability to do his work—that is to say from his health and vitality. In times of war every one laments a "C<sub>3</sub> population"; but in times of peace also each person in a community loses if others

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have bad eyesight or slovenly gait or any physical weakness or mental inertia. In the plainest words, then, the health of each is not obtainable unless public policy provides for the health of all.

### *Methods used for Obtaining Health as a Common Good*

But, in practice, the present institutions for public health did not arise out of any such general considerations as these. They arose out of the attempt to cure obvious evils. In mediaeval conditions such as existed in Europe until about the sixteenth century, and such as still exist in China and parts of India to-day, leprosy, plague, cholera, and other diseases made human life short, uncertain, and disagreeable. Nothing was known about the causes of these diseases. Prayers and ceremonies did not decrease them. And official or public action was confined to assisting the sufferers to bear what seemed to be God's will or Fate. A new and startling increase of some few of the traditional diseases, however, occurred in the early industrial period, a century ago. Epidemics of cholera and typhus attacked the poorer quarters of the new city-areas, where the "workers" of the new order lived. But meantime scientific method had been developed and the control over physical conditions was more generally understood. Two cogent reasons appeared for preventing the spread of disease—first, although the poor were more likely to suffer than the rich, no one

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was safe; and, secondly, "labour" for the new industry would be lost, if lives and health could not be saved. Hence came the application of scientific method to the discovery of the causes and cures of the more startling diseases. And hence also, public policy came to be concerned with "the health of the people," chiefly in the industrial city-areas.

It was discovered—it was by no means obvious, as it is to us—that exposed refuse or offal and contaminated water were the immediate causes of the diseases in the poorer quarters. Therefore, public policy, aiming at health, dealt first with the removal of nuisances, next with the provision of new drainage, and, thirdly, with water-supply. Descriptions can be read of open middens, of private cesspools, and of the few wells upon which a new population of about 100,000 in one city had to depend, a century ago. The struggle to transform this situation is a most important phase in the development of popular government; but it has often been described elsewhere. Both the purpose and the methods of government changed, as it has been shown above in the chapter on the city. But now we are discussing not the health of neighbours in cities only, but the health of all men in all the world which has been improved by government.

For the purpose of the argument here the most important result of that advance in the art of government is the particular *kind* of common good which was obtained and the manner in which it was found desirable to organize the provision and distribution



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of that common good. The health which was secured, as an escape from disease, depends upon a common drainage-system and a common water-supply, and also upon an international control of epidemics. These had been known in earlier civilizations; but in their new form they were made more easily available for all persons in all nations; and their quality and efficacy are probably greater than any hitherto. The new "good," which is the result, is better than the "good" enjoyed by the rich before; just as the new water-supply of the cities is purer, more abundant, and less costly than any hitherto used by any dwellers in any city. Secondly, each man was in danger of disease; each man desired health for himself; and it was found that he could obtain it best by sharing it with his neighbours—wise or foolish, rich or poor. But the sharing necessarily led to the creation of something quite new, to be shared. The drains and wells of the rich were not taken away and given to the poor; nor did the rich under the new policy secure better drains and water than the poor. For purposes of health, public policy treats all alike.

The incidental and unintended results of the new public health policy are no less remarkable. Not only were the old epidemics prevented, but also the expectation of life for every one was increased; and the vitality of all was improved. About fourteen years have been added to the average expectation of life at birth since the 1880's in city-areas. The decrease in disease of all kinds has implied better eyesight,

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better hearing, and more sensitiveness, as well as more physical strength. No doubt all this is not due to public health policy alone; for diet and clothing have improved; education has increased skill in common customs, the birth-rate has gone down; and such causes also must have affected health and vitality. But public policy has, in fact, assisted all the other forces tending to improve health: and the result is before us. We are ourselves parts of a new kind of community living at a higher level of intelligence, vitality, and fellow-feeling than our ancestors, largely because of the public health policy of the past century.

The best effects of health policy have been obtained while the franchise has been extended and government, withdrawn from privileged or select classes, submitted to continuous public criticism. Elected representatives have co-operated with technical experts to assist ordinary folk in their natural desire to use the results of knowledge and skill for their advantage. And new institutions of government have been gradually built up into the structure at present in existence—local, national, and international. To obtain the common good—health—*local* authorities organize sanitation and water-supply and some hospitals; the *national* authorities organize, in Great Britain, for example, insurance against ill-health; and *international* authorities, the Bureau of Public Health, and the League of Nations (Health Section), organize the prevention of epidemics. Thus, in the organizations for health, public policy aims at a good shared

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locally, another shared nationally, and another shared internationally. But they are all aspects of the common good which the ordinary person enjoys in the avoidance of disease and death or the extension of his vitality. For such purposes the art of government exists; and success in attaining such purposes is one of the most reliable tests of the excellence of any system of government. But the system of government for health purposes is *one whole throughout the world*. Local authorities are connected through central Governments, and these again are connected by international institutions. Differences between forms of government do, indeed, affect the working of the system; but no nation disregards health and in all localities common folk are willing to assist and be assisted by far-distant foreigners in maintaining and increasing the common good—health, which they all desire.

## *New Steps Necessary*

But the institutions and policy we have inherited have the defects natural to the way in which they have been developed. The institutions for public health in most localities and nationally, in most countries, are the results of a succession of separate efforts to overcome different evils. They are ill co-ordinated and not governed by any single consistent conception of their purpose. Whitewashing lodging-houses or inspecting food or planning areas for new houses are

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all functions which have been undertaken by government at different dates, under quite different social conditions. In general, the institutions are conceived to be either preventive of disease or to be forms of quasi-charitable assistance to the poor. There is no close co-ordination between provisions for health in factories and for the health of school-children or health in homes. Only in 1917 was there an attempt in Great Britain to bring the chief health services together in one Department, the New Ministry of Health. But we are now faced by the still greater problems—the co-ordination of “voluntary” and public authority hospitals, and the relations of the public medical service with the traditional “private practice.” The traditional confusion of ancient institutions and new patchwork is obviously inadequate for modern needs.

## *The Art of Medicine*

As for the policy we have inherited, it is still dominated by the conception of preventing disease. That was, indeed, an advance on the first steps in public health policy—removal of nuisances and cure. For some time at the end of the last century “preventive medicine” was the most advanced and progressive form of health policy. The main purpose was the provision of security and perhaps also immunity from disease and disablement. But a new stage has now been reached. Policy is now conceived by the

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most active minds in the medical profession as not merely protective but inductive to new development. The child, for example, is not conceived mainly as a possible victim of disease, who must be rendered secure or immune. For the new medicine, the child is a new force or complex of energies seeking proper and vigorous development. Security from disease, therefore, becomes secondary to the promotion of health: and *the art of medicine is the creation of more health*, not merely the cure of patients, nor even the prevention of disease. The effect of this new conception upon public policy would be most clearly seen in the educational system and in the provision of new opportunities for the use of leisure for all. But public authorities have hardly yet understood the change in the conception of health; and many of them would be horrified to be told that playgrounds may be more important than drains. Physical or bodily energy is still crudely conceived. Health is still conceived as merely the absence of disease.

Again, those who are experts on health policy, even if they have progressed beyond the conception of "preventive medicine," do not seem to have grasped the newly discovered psychological aspects of the problem. It is generally recognized nowadays that the mental, intellectual, or emotional attitude of a person may be the result of ill-health, and may also cause ill-health. Not merely the old "bedside manner," which the skilled general practitioner used to support his prescription of drugs, is in question. It is not merely

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that all men, women, and children can be more cheerful than they are; but we know now much more about fatigue, repressions, and abnormal complexes, caused in some cases by accident, in others by the occupations which men and women endure. Long hours at a stretch, dismal surroundings, and lack of imagination enough to use leisure—all these are causes of ill-health or depressed vitality. But modern medicine aims at curing, not the disease, but the patient. The art of medicine does not now deal only with "symptoms," but with a person's general condition. And this should change the basis of our policy for the health of a community. Not a mere list of evils, but the general low level of the health in which most of us live—that is the problem. That low level causes an inertia or mental depression, which most people do not notice because they have become accustomed to it since they were children. Clearly there is already enjoyment and vigour in all circles of society; but there would be more if the streets were less grey, the rooms we live in less sunless, the spaces for the eye more noble, the sounds of street-traffic less dreadful. And if it is too much to expect public policy to effect all this, at least it might take into consideration, for example, in housing, something more than the cubic space for each person, or in schools something more than bare walls and ugly benches. All this may seem to have nothing to do with health, if the psychological aspects of health are ignored. But, at least, we may expect the public authorities to provide

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more adequately for the use of leisure in order to increase the psychological tendencies to health. Parks and playgrounds and open spaces are results of the earlier stage in public policy, good as far as that goes. Swimming-pools and country estates have been added by some public authorities. But now we must deal with the houses and streets themselves. Merely to "paint the town red," in a new sense, or to put colour and form into the lines of sleeping-boxes called houses would improve matters.

A single definite example of the conditions which depress vitality may be found in the burning of raw coal in city-areas. This is a survival of those village customs with which our grandparents came into the new cities of the past century. A smoking chimney from the village forge or the cottage on the hill-side may be very romantic. But when the same sort of chimney is only a few inches or yards from several thousand others, each pouring soot and smoke into the eyes and throats and lungs of those living next door, then we have the diseases of darkness, from which we all suffer. A domestic or industrial coal-fire is like the private cesspool or water-well of the early industrial era. We have now a public water-supply and drainage because the wells were contaminated. So we ought to have a public heat-supply which would be much more efficient than the mediaeval system so much admired by those who do not have to light the fires or clean the grates. The traditional custom in Great Britain of burning raw coal in cities



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should be undermined and replaced by a public policy for the provision of a common source of heat. Financially such a policy should be advantageous to the public authority of any large area; but the most important advantage to be derived from it is health. The reduction of tuberculosis, of the risk of death in the winter months, and of the anaemia of children would at once raise the whole level of vitality. The abolition of the city fire-places for coal, therefore, would be a definite step forward in health.

### *The New Conception of Health*

But the removal of existing dangers to health is less important than the creation of entirely new opportunities for physical and mental development. Even the normal healthy person of to-day has not as much vitality as he should have. The defects of vitality are, no doubt, due partly to the industrial system and the inadequacy of supplies; but apart from these, some change can be made. The dominant idea in public policy should be, not the cure nor the prevention of disease, but the creation of a healthy community with a general standard of health much higher than to-day's. Obviously disease, perhaps in new forms, will continue to exist and will have to be dealt with. But we have advanced far beyond the needs of the early industrialism. We assume that city-areas have adequate sanitation and water-supply. We assume an expectation of life at birth of about

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fifty-five years. We should assume, even if in practice we neglect country areas, that in them also sanitation, water-supply, and medical services are available. But we can now move forward, on the basis of the health services which we already take for granted.

The creation of a healthy community involves the use—for the advantage of all—of modern knowledge and skill in physical development, diet, and housing. Policy must affect maternity and child welfare, the activities of children at school, occupational conditions, facilities for recreation, and the personal ability of each to take advantage of modern knowledge. Such a policy, therefore, is educational in two senses: it is, on the one hand, a provision of opportunities and, on the other, a promotion of the will to use them. The new health requires probably a better adjusted diet, less traditional clothing, and new ways of using houses—if not entirely new kinds of houses to be used. But all these again require a new outlook and energy among ordinary folk, which can be created by public policy.

### *Medicine as a Public Service*

Changes in the traditional institutions should include a much more efficiently organized medical service. The old-fashioned conception of private enterprise in curing disease by competing general practitioners and specialists is out-of-date. Each nation should have one organized medical service, whose members

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have fixed salaries and are not dependent upon fees from the diseased. The younger members of the medical profession would naturally give better service, if they were not traditionally induced to aim at a "large practice." The relation between the cure and prevention of disease and the positive promotion of health would be more clearly perceived and more efficiently organized. As much personal choice of the practitioner by the patient would be possible as at present is supposed to exist; but the service would not be based upon "patients." All the members of the community should equally be in the care of the medical profession. The specialist and the general medical officer would have to teach the use of diet, clothing, house-management, and even some forms of the use of leisure. And the "honour of the profession" would mean not merely playing fair in the struggle for an income, but the conscious service of the community as the dominant purpose of each physician, surgeon, dentist, nurse, or other member of the medical staff.

Finally, modern medicine cannot be efficiently developed unless the traditional system of hospitals and medical schools is transformed. A modern hospital is not merely a collection of beds for the poor, supported by the spare money of those who can afford themselves to use "nursing homes." A modern hospital is a complex of mechanisms and other apparatus for diagnosis, operation, and cure. Indeed, the practice of modern medicine, even with regard

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to the cure of obvious disease, requires apparatus which is much too expensive and elaborate to be owned by a single specialist or a "nursing home." The "scale" of modern methods of diagnosis requires a large and efficient organization. Even the very large and well-equipped modern hospital is only one part of a vast system of research-laboratories and buildings for specialist treatment which is spread all over the world. The old voluntary hospitals, nursing homes, and money-making specialists are quite obsolete; and public policy for health must therefore reform the traditional institutions. Such public policy is obviously much too far-reaching to be left to local authorities only. It requires a revision of the whole national policy with respect to health; and it may also require some improvement in the international institutions now in existence. But those are problems of detail. The first step is to establish a general understanding of the purpose in view. If it is grasped that health and not disease is the basis of the art of medicine, it will be obvious that the old system of organization of the medical services is obsolete.

## *The Part the Citizen has to Play*

But no new organization will be enough to raise the whole level of vitality in any nation unless the ordinary citizen plays his part. Food cannot be digested for us by experts; nor can clothes keep us warm by proxy. The conception of public policy

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as the provision of services is inadequate: for, in promoting health, for example, no provision of medicines can assist the sufferer, if he does not take the medicine provided. Each person must play an active and intelligent part in the raising of the level of his own vitality. Public policy should be public in the sense that it is a policy adopted and maintained by the public, not merely for the public. And here again, as in the argument above, a new complex of intelligence and enthusiasm is necessary. Each person must feel himself or herself to have a part to play in a common enterprise.

The majority of men and women are not aware of the greater health and vigour which can be attained by them, if they choose. They do not envisage a community, such as could easily be created, in which all members could "get more out of life." We are still in most countries only half awake to the nature of health and vitality. We think it enough to avoid obvious disease. But that attitude is obsolete. A healthy person is not merely one who avoids colds in the head. Such a person is not merely one who is immune from the grosser forms of bodily pain. He is a person who can use his limbs and his senses more fully than anyone now does. A healthy community is one whose members are in vigorous and varied intercourse at many different levels of experience—from boisterous play to creative drama. The purpose of public policy should be the creation of such a community. In order to carry out such a policy, no

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doubt the institutions and functions of government may have to be changed even more than they were changed in the first advances made during the past century; but here we are concerned with the purpose for which such institutions should be used and with the force which should use them. The purpose is a fuller vitality; and it is attained mainly by the enthusiasm of ordinary citizens.

But whatever our final purpose, policy should not be Utopian. Those of us who have security from starvation and the diseases of deficiency can move forward of ourselves. But it must always be remembered that millions, even in the most advanced countries, are still without the barest needs for security from disease. In all city-areas there are children, in the poorer quarters, who are anaemic and devitalized merely because they lack adequate nourishment and clothing. Many recent surveys have proved that the children of manual workers, between the ages of one and five years, as compared with the children of professional and salaried classes, are, on an average, deficient in physical fitness. And it has been shown conclusively that this is due to overcrowding and insufficient diet. The first step in creating a healthy community is to raise the level of fitness in these circles; but that obviously requires an industrial policy as much as a policy for the public organization of health services. It is, however, as much a part of the health problem as the supply of good water was a part during the past century. Again, deficiency in

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diet is not only a problem of supply: it is also a problem of competence in cooking, in keeping food, and in the character of meals. Investigations into diet, not only the amount and cost, but the physiological factors, are still proceeding; but enough is already known for public policy to assist in securing the right kinds of food and to increase the general skill in the use of it. The details of a policy would have to be carefully considered. They would include the promotion of the proper use of milk, of fruit, of new and hitherto untried foods and ways of cooking.

## *Enthusiasm and Propaganda*

But policy, if it is to be operative, needs enthusiasm; and it is impossible to arouse enthusiasm for drainage or diet. Also those who know all about drains seem to know very little about human beings. A public policy for health, therefore, must combine detailed proposals for levelling up the conditions for health in poorer quarters with a clear conception of the vigorous community to be created. Thus, if we propose to abolish the evils due to poverty, it must be done, not out of kindness to the poor, not in order to protect the rich, but for the sake of a whole community. The good that is sought in promoting the health of poor children is not their good only. What should be given to them is not merely a share in what those who are less poor already possess, but a part to play



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in the making of a better kind of life, which all members of the community are to create for themselves. Under the general conception of that new kind of life are included housing, the planning of districts, facilities for the use of leisure, improvements in diet and clothing, and many more intimate and personal questions. The general conception must be inclusive enough to attract a vigorous enthusiasm for it; and it must contain enough definite detail to provide guidance in administration and legislation.

Health and vigour in a new community are the professed purposes of the enthusiasm under dictatorships. In Italy the Fascist Government promotes games; in Germany the youth are given martial exercises; and in Russia the incredibly low level of personal cleanliness before the Revolution has been raised by the Communists. But there are serious limitations to the conception of public health policy in all dictatorships. In Russia only the bare beginnings of a modern community on a higher level of health are to be found. In Germany and Italy the military mind appears to be dominant and vigour is tested mainly by capacity for bearing arms; also the position of women is degraded by a return to the barbaric conception of their function in society. The whole person, male or female, is made into a mere instrument for a mythological "nation," which in practice is the personal will of an ill-educated and uncriticized dictator. And yet the "youth movement" of the years immediately following the Great War in Germany,

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and the "Giovinezza" in Italy appear to survive under the surface of life under orders.

In the democratic tradition, also, there is a very general enthusiasm for vigour and for sensitiveness to nature and personality. Especially among the younger generation, the body is rightly regarded as part of the spirit. At least, in our tradition in Great Britain and America, if not in France, women are assumed to have intellectual functions and a place in public life; and the person, man or woman, not the fortune of a system or a Government, is felt to be the final purpose of the public organization of life in common. The intellectual and emotional setting within which a health policy—local, national, or international—should operate is entirely different from that of a century ago. Here is an immense opportunity. Here is a challenge to those who accept the assumptions of personal spontaneity and vigour which are implied in the democratic ideal; for no better basis for a new life in common as the purpose of public policy could be found than a new conception of health. The practical issue in the democratic tradition to-day depends upon our being able to establish a definite policy upon that basis, supported by the spontaneous enthusiasm of all citizens.

## CHAPTER VI

### WEALTH IN THE MAKING

THE second of the common goods which should be the aim of public policy is wealth. Every one agrees that wealth is good; but in what sense can it be called a common good? The ordinary attitude towards it implies that each man's wealth is what the others lack and that, therefore, no one can share wealth with others; for wealth, in ordinary conversation, means the house and the hat and the food each man uses for himself and the power or the claim to use such things.

Wealth here is taken to mean what the economists mean by it—goods and services having value *in exchange*. All such phrases as "wealth is life" are metaphorical or poetical. For the purpose of the argument about a common good, wealth is only one of the aspects or instruments of welfare or well-being. It includes everything that has an exchange value, that can be obtained from somebody else by giving goods or service in exchange. The process of exchange is itself one of the methods of increasing the amount of wealth available, either for further exchange or for final use; and the study of all the factors concerned is called "economics." But public policy obviously does not depend upon economic factors, to the exclusion of other factors. Economists may be useful to those who want to arrive at *some* decisions about

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public policy, but they are of no use for deciding what the chief purpose of that policy should be; because, as economists, they know nothing of health, for example, or education or racial differences. They are concerned with the cost of services, not with the more important question, whether it is worth while to pay the cost. Economics, therefore, should affect public policy only as chemistry affects the art of medicine; or as electricity, used in a telephone message, affects a proposal of marriage over the telephone.

For public policy, the conception of wealth should always be reduced from terms of money to terms of actual goods and services. We have been taught that truth by the instability of currencies since the Great War; but the lesson does not seem yet to be understood by those who have power, in finance, banking and politics. Indeed, it will be argued in what follows here that some of the difficulties of public policy arise out of the tendency to think only in terms of money, when the more important fact is what money can buy. The fact, for example, that imports in two years into any country may have the same money-value is less important than the fact that in one year they may consist of foodstuffs and in the other of machinery; for no one can eat machinery. The problem, therefore, is primarily one of goods and services—first, how the production of such things may be promoted or directed, and, secondly, how they should be used. In this chapter the argument concerns only production; and use or consumption of wealth will be discussed later.

## *The Challenge to Democracy*

### *Public Policy and the Pursuit of Private Wealth*

It is assumed that public policy is somehow concerned with the production of wealth. The relation between the production of wealth, however, and government or the State-system itself is in a still more peculiar position than in the case of health; because producing wealth and offering services are assumed by most people to be "private" matters in which each goes his own way or as far as he can without being stopped by the others going their different ways. Thus the jungle or the wild country, in which the struggle is carried on by each against all, is supposed to be an "obvious and simple system of natural liberty."<sup>1</sup> It is, in fact, anything but a system; and, so far from being "natural," it is the highly artificial result of thousands of years of slave-civilization. It is merely a confused scramble. Most people, however, "draw the line" somewhere, and all admit that the "line" should be drawn for other people. Government and the State are supposed to be clearings in this jungle, although it is never quite clear whether, in the popular creed, the State is a positive alternative to jungle habits or only a keeper of the ring for the universal prize-fight. Orthodox Socialism maintains the former; and traditional Conservatism, especially in its "liberal" version, maintains the latter. But for our purposes here it is enough if we note that the existing practice in most countries includes some jungle and some

<sup>1</sup> Smith: *Wealth of Nations*, IV, 9.

## *Wealth in the Making*

clearing, some private efforts for private gain, and some control of such efforts, by alternative organizations for supplying some kinds of wealth. Public policy, if it is to be based upon the existing situation, must assume that there is some competitive struggle for private wealth, and also some organization for obtaining wealth in common. The practical problem is the proportion which ought to exist between these two in the immediate future, even if some think that one or the other form of productive organization ought to be abolished. Some may believe that the telephone system, for example, in Great Britain ought to be under a private company. Perhaps some think that water-supply or drainage ought to be sources of private profit. And, on the other hand, others believe that railways and coal-mining ought to be organized by a "public" commission, or even that all production ought to be so. But the argument here has a more limited scope. It aims only at discovering a policy for production in "Western" communities which will promote the supply of more goods for the use of those who lack such goods now.

To say even that, however, is to go farther than the traditional business man or working-man is willing to go—not because they are wicked or acquisitive, but because they simply do not understand what is meant. If one offers a savage quinine instead of a charm against fever, he will suspect one of plotting his death. To advocate a policy for production mainly in order that dock-labourers may have more

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food and better houses seems to be an attack upon clerks and skilled engineers; because hardly anyone thinks of wealth as a common good. Each calculates his private gain. Nobody thinks of the common loss.

At the risk of platitude, therefore, and not for the learned reader, it may be worth while to state in what sense goods in exchange can be common goods. What is called "the division of labour" is one reason why the production of wealth is a common good; for no one can do his part in agriculture or industry unless others do their parts, not only in selling food to him but also in bringing his products to completion and to the market. It is good for each that others should be willing to produce and that they should do it effectually; and this not merely because these others may thus obtain purchasing-power to pay each one for what he does, but also because the goods and services, resulting from their work, are essential parts in the complex of civilized life in which all have a share. But public policy with respect to agriculture and industry is traditionally dominated by certain assumptions, which are not understood for what they are—memories of a vanished past.

## *Traditional Policy*

Policy is expressed through the institutions of Government. In Great Britain, economic policy involves the action of the Board of Trade, the Ministry of Labour,



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the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, and other minor departments, such as the Ministry of Transport and the Mines Department. The "economic" functions of government are thus normally concerned with production, rather than consumption; for the Ministry of Food which was established in the Great War was abolished. And most of the present policy embodied in the "economic" departments is the result of the attitudes and ideas of the early industrial period. Recent changes, for example, in the policy of the Ministry of Agriculture and the use of the Exchange Equalization Fund may imply new principles. But at present only the very general character of the policy of the departments is to be considered; and this is dominated by two long-standing assumptions: first, that production is good in whatever direction it operates; secondly, that the function of government with regard to production is, as far as possible, to "leave it alone." Thus, on the one hand, the attitude is, "Produce! Produce! Government should promote production." And on the other hand, the attitude is, "We must, alas! set some limits to the 'freedom' of private enterprise—in factory laws and company laws; but we do so as little as possible"—which implies that the "common good" in production is best attained by as little central direction of the process as possible. These obsolete attitudes are embodied in the institutions of government and affect whatever political party has control of the administration. It is not a question of persons in the civil service. The

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departments themselves, in their organization, express an obsolete point of view.

In practice, the actual policy followed in the passing of new laws and the establishment of new institutions of government has been the result of pressure from this or that organized group or "interest." The limits set to the exploitation of women and children are due to pressure from groups of social reformers. But even these may be said to have stood for an "interest"—the rights of the oppressed: for they do not seem to have been guided by any general view of the good of the community as a whole, to be established by the new legislation. Apart from "reforming" Acts, policy has been mainly the result of demands by sectional "interests," in the financial sense of that word, for protection or assistance. The Board of Trade is conceived to assist British traders, apparently in competition with the non-British; the Ministry of Agriculture is supposed to assist, not the consumers of food, but the farmers in Great Britain. Thus in legislation and in administration, so far as production is concerned, the dominant conception of public policy is that it is a result of a "balance," if not an actual conflict, of different interests. There is no conception of a comprehensive "common" good aimed at in the economic departments of government, nor in the policy of the Acts affecting production. The actual situation is the result of an ill-considered and haphazard growth under the pressure of conflicting interests and the unconscious influence of obsolete

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social ideas. It is not implied that the Acts or the departments are bad; indeed, it is wonderful that they are not more obstructive of the common good in the policy of production than they are. But if the resultant policy as a whole is not worse, that must be due to some "invisible hand"; for no Cabinet and no Parliament has ever attempted to subordinate to one policy or to make consistent the different parts of our administrative system. The "invisible hand" is nothing but unconscious habit.

The fundamental assumption is that there is a "going concern," which has to be assisted either by promoting some activities within it or by limiting the internal "friction" incidental to it. And this "going concern," which for our purpose here is the present industrial-agricultural system of production, is merely a part of the larger social system which has been inherited from the far past. It is part of the order of things in which most members of any community are treated as the instruments of the culture of a few; in which, therefore, the majority are trying to obtain a little more than a bare subsistence, and the few are alarmed lest the claims of the many should leave them not enough surplus for the graces of life. The whole governmental tradition, therefore, is dominated by the unconscious survival in men's minds of *the assumptions of a slave-society*, in which famine was a danger and there was never enough for all to have a surplus. In such circumstances progressive reform naturally seemed to be a claim for a larger share in

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what was assumed to exist, power or wealth; and the only common purpose was to produce more to be shared.

Similarly in the political theory of the past century, the controversies about the State *versus* the Citizen or Socialism *versus* Individual Liberty all assumed that there was a fixed amount of power to be distributed. Only on that assumption could it be argued that, if the State increased its activities, the citizens must have fewer activities. But, in fact, the area of "power" extends in all directions; and experience has shown that both government and individual liberty can increase at the same time. If that happens, clearly both terms change their original meaning. But the nineteenth century was not "Darwinian" enough to allow for variation and natural selection in the terms of political controversy. It was obsessed with the assumption of fixed rights or powers in a world that had never had "enough to go round." It lived under the ancient shadow of want in a slave-civilization.

## *The Policy of Trade Unions*

The position of trade unions is typical. Clearly the members of trade unions are important for the whole community as "producers." Railwaymen, coal-miners, textile-workers, dockers, and others are essential parts of the productive system; and the organization of their work, so as to give it the greatest efficacy, is

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clearly of supreme importance to any community and to the world at large. But in the first place, early industry and agriculture inherited the assumptions of slave-civilizations, and the early trade unions had to face the results of these assumptions. It was assumed that the "worker" had no concern with the "management" or the policy of production—not even concern with the conditions under which he worked. His interests would be looked after by his employers who, as slave-masters in earlier times, could be relied upon not to misuse or under-nourish the instruments of his own wealth. Cows did not "combine" on farms; nor did machines in factories. Why then should "hands" combine? They would not know their own "true" interests. So it was assumed; and so it is still assumed by more men and women than would like to confess it. Underlying much of the feeling against the workers in industry, when they make any claims or go on strike, is the very ancient assumption that slavery is in the nature of things. And so, of course, it has been in most of the ten thousand or more years of human civilization. Production has always depended upon the work of the great majority in any community, who had no choice but were compelled to do what others decided in order to get barely enough to live upon. This is not due to capitalism. It is much older than any form of capitalism. What was resented by the "upper" classes in the days of the laws against combinations and what is still resented by them wherever trade unions arise spontaneously is that the

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instruments of production should claim to be anything more than instruments.

But trade unions came into existence and were given legal rights. They were regarded by their members as means for promoting their own interests; and in claiming legal recognition they seemed to claim a share in an already existing sum of "rights" from which the worker had been excluded. Thus trade unionism was born into a hostile world; and it still bears the marks of a fighting organization. Here, therefore, is another example of the conception of society as a balance of conflicting interests claiming shares in power or legal rights. The trade unions stand for their members, not for the community at large. That, indeed, is the ground given for the abolition of trade unions by Fascist dictatorships; although employers' associations, which also stand for sectional interests, have not been abolished. The Fascist excuse for abolishing the first effort of manual workers to escape from the assumptions of slavery is only a "cover" for the desire to direct slaves "for their good." But it is important for public policy everywhere that trade unions do belong, by date of birth, to the period in which policy was conceived to be rightly decided by a conflict of interests. It is also important that the leaders of trade unions themselves are concerned, not with the greater efficiency of production for use, but with the share of the particular group they represent in the gain from production for exchange. This may cease to be true; and in any case it is not any

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special type of defect. It is simply the attitude of the nineteenth century towards production, which implied that it was mainly a means for obtaining a share of power or wealth for the producer.

Clearly it is useless for the supporters of trade unionism to reply to the slave-policy of Fascist dictatorships by merely reasserting the obsolete conception of the right to a share and the disregard of the good of a whole community by any party or group in the pursuit of their own interests. The Fascists are quite right in saying that, whatever the good of manual workers, it cannot take precedence, even for manual workers, of the good of the more inclusive community. Therefore, the trade unions must, in face of Fascism, move forward to another position. They must stand for the need of the whole community in the production of wealth. The manual workers, like all other workers, make the life of the whole community possible by the work they do; and for this reason—not as one “interest” in conflict with others—they should have organizations which are spontaneous, not created “from above”—organizations which assist in making production more efficient. A good cause is damaged by obsolete assumptions affecting the policy of its advocates. In spite, therefore, of wrongs done by the community to trade unionists in the past, the “defence of the workers” complex should give place to the conception of service for the community. Even if employers and capital-owners make money out of clothes,



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it is the wearer of the clothes who is most truly served.

### *The General Scramble*

Not only among the manual workers, however, but even more disastrously among capital-owners and organizers of finance the obsolete conception survives that, if each stands for his own gain, the common good will be attained. And government itself is under pressure from groups which have no knowledge of the common good and confessedly no interest in it. The confused and, in some ways, contradictory policies now commonly followed in most industrial countries are therefore the result of variable and fortuitous pressures, on this side or on that, of opposing interests; and nothing is gained except the sort of peace which is a desolation, when one interest or the other takes complete control under a dictatorship.

The disastrous effect of unplanned and divided efforts to make anything and everything for gain to the makers has led to accumulations of food and other goods which cannot be purchased by those who are in need. Whatever the purely "economic" reasons for this absurdity, it is partly due to the obsolete conception that wealth in the making is mainly a means of income for the makers and not a supply of needs. The functions of persons and groups concerned in production are therefore wrongly conceived. Their position as creators of something new is not understood even by themselves; and therefore

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these persons and groups obstruct where they ought to assist one another, while government or public policy wastes most of its force in trying to keep each out of the other's way.

## *Ancient Obsessions*

In the larger issue of productive organization in general we have inherited also another assumption—older than slavery—that there is *a danger of want*. In the early industrial period anything that could be made could be sold. The world was starving for goods. The markets were there. They had only to be found. New land was brought under cultivation in America to feed the industrial workers of Europe; and the wants of the East were supplied by manufacturers in the West. There was a rapid expansion of production; but the goods produced—except for the machinery for further production—were much the same as had always been produced—wheat and meat, and cotton and woollen clothing. And in spite of the increased production, the ancient spectre of want disturbed Malthus and others when they saw the population of Europe increasing as well. Even now in India the population seems to be increasing so fast that the supplies produced are less and not more per head of population. It is an illusion that the supplies cannot be increased even faster than the population; but most people are dominated by that illusion. In a world on the verge of want, control of production or choice

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of what to produce seems to be irrelevant or absurd. All that is urgent is—Output. The more there is of anything or everything, the better for everybody. Progress is conceived to depend mainly upon more production. The danger of famine from failure of harvests must be overcome; and then all would live happily ever after, always making more which would always be too little!

In such an atmosphere public policy was naturally concentrated upon increasing production; and little or nothing was done to organize it. Each enterprise pushed forward its capital-equipment and its search for markets. Some enterprises went bankrupt; some could exist only by cheap labour in bad conditions; but some became immensely wealthy and efficient. The whole process was experimental; for modern industry came into a world already organized upon an agricultural and craft basis. In the first industrial revolution the change introduced was not fundamental. The new production was only an introduction into the world of land-owners and social classes long established, of a new system to take the place of the subsidiary craft-system of the mediaeval world. Agricultural methods were almost unaffected; and old social distinctions were modified, but in some cases strengthened by the new power to accumulate private wealth. Government stood by. It maintained property rights—with new meanings, affecting industrial capital; it kept order; and it was used by a few humanitarians to redress the most obvious wrongs

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done to the weak. But it was also very useful to the strong and the wealthy in preventing fraud and pushing foreign trade, for the advantage of any group that could exert political pressure.

Public policy, besides promoting production, was restricted as far as it could be, because in the early industrial period government had been in the hands of a few land-owners who "interfered" with the development of the new industries. Government in the 1830's and 1860's changed radically in most European countries: for power passed from the land-owners to the owners of industrial capital. But the old assumption survived. Government should not "interfere." The common good from the new production seemed to be best secured if every one was free to make what he chose and to sell where he could obtain the best price. Social reform and industrial legislation were, unfortunately, as most capital-owners thought, introduced by well-intentioned outsiders. But the less any nation had of such things, the more "efficient" production would be—that is to say, the more money-value would be obtained for the goods produced. Even the Treasuries and Finance Ministries of the different States seriously believed that there was no Day of Judgment for the increase of productive power. It was regarded as proved that the workers could live on the production of more machinery, whatever happened to the products of that machinery!

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### *The New Problem*

These assumptions and the policies based on them are now quite obsolete. They do not fit the situation to-day. A century has passed since modern industry began. There is no longer any danger of a lack of production or productive power; for, in fact, there is more power to produce than is used and much more knowledge, still unused, which could increase existing productive power. Agriculture has been transformed. Science and mechanization have made it possible to increase agricultural production in any part of the world. The distinction between bad and good land is now not "natural," but the effect of applied service. New power-supply—oil and electricity—has given new regions industrial advantages; and invention has decreased the amount of labour necessary for increased production.

The problem of production to-day, therefore, is not *how* to produce, but *what* to produce. And that is a problem of *organizing*, not of merely promoting, production. That is to say, public policy should be concerned to decide what part of productive energy—capital, labour, motive-force—should be used in this way and what in that. Each national Government can either develop the agriculture of the nation or the shipping or the manufacture for home consumption or the sale of goods abroad—in certain proportions, deliberately chosen. But in a world of surplus, not of want, public policy must decide

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*what* should be produced—in terms of goods and services.

### *A New Public Policy*

This is sometimes called “planning”; but even that word has become a sacred symbol without exact meaning, as the word “rationalization” did before. If, however, the word “plan” is limited to mean only a directive central control of the chief enterprises in industry and agriculture, then “plan” is what is meant here by a consistent public policy. But most of those who speak of “plan” and “rationalization” are concerned primarily with the money-gain to be derived from production by the producers or capital-owners—and that emphatically is not what is proposed here. No public policy can be based upon the fact that certain acts “pay”; for an enterprise can be made to “pay” by repressing or restricting service; and to do so would be opposed to the common good. But clearly it may also “pay” to sell larger quantities of an article to a greater number of those with low incomes: and in this sense public policy for production should “pay.” It should not be a policy for giving away gratuitously larger quantities of goods produced, by the manipulation either of credit or currency. And this again implies that policy must remove unemployment; it must aim at distributing work for pay, not merely income. It must be a plan for goods and services to be used, not merely for profits or wages or taxes to be raised.

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The new principle may be stated in summary form as follows. First, what is to be done by public power? Not, as in the early industrial period, a mere holding the ring while the different interests balance, each staking out a claim within the existing traditional society. On the contrary, we need now the positive creating of a new organization for co-ordinating the different enterprises or productive units. This co-ordination is the chief function of the central public power; and, therefore, the form in which that power is administered may have to change by an amalgamation or readjustment between departments or directorships. For example, in the British system the departments directly concerned with economic policy should be themselves more closely co-ordinated. It should be made impossible for the administration in the Ministry of Agriculture, for example, to follow one policy and that in the Board of Trade a different and opposed policy, as now occurs. But the co-ordination exercised through any central power is not necessarily coercive in its influence on the enterprises brought into the new order. The proportion of coercion and consent in the method of change will naturally vary in different countries and in different industries. But the more subtle the art of government the less coercion is necessary; for persuasion is the best basis for obedience and "propaganda" can work wonders—much more than law and sanctions. The organization of production on a large scale is more "natural" in some industries than in others. In some cases no



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influence has so far induced small-scale enterprises to co-ordinate their work—for example, the cotton and coal industries in Great Britain. In other cases, for example, the chemical industry, large-scale organization of production is already almost adequate. But the predominant influence in any case should be some general understanding of the common good as the purpose of co-ordination for the making of a new system; for, in fact, such co-ordination as has been already achieved has not had in view the common good of the whole community. Plan has been producers' plan.

There are two outstanding oppositions in the present system which would have to be changed into forms of co-operation: one is the opposition of rival enterprises or of one industry against the other in the search for capital or markets; the other is the opposition of those who work for wages and salaries against capital-owners in any industry or enterprise. The danger of advocating the end of opposition is that it may seem to be aimed at eliminating or destroying one or other of the interests concerned; but that is emphatically *not* the suggestion here.

In the case of rival enterprises or rival kinds of industry co-ordination of production should depend upon an estimate of the whole market. In theory at any rate, the bread industry ought to gain, even in a period of falling prices, if one firm of bakers did not undercut the other; and as for separate industries, the wages in the baking industry ought to be clearly

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seen to be the market for the shoe-manufacturers. There will be, in theory at any rate, some rate of earning in each industry which is of advantage both to it and to the other industries which sell goods to the earners in it. A central system of co-ordination would aim at approaching that rate in each and all. As for the other opposition—those who earn wages and salaries, organized in trade unions, would have to use their organization for promoting the success of this or that industry. The activities of a trade union, therefore, would be essentially not a claim to a share in the proceeds but a function of the system for providing goods and services. And, similarly, the employers' association or the agents of capital-owners would have to promote the best possible payment of the employed, for a maintenance of the market and also as a reinforcement of vitality for production.

It is not implied that the public power should establish co-ordination at once over any large field. The establishment of the new system might be gradual and tentative; but policy should tend towards a central co-ordination of all production through control of the key positions; and this control would be most easily obtained by means of a National Commission for Credit and Investment. Such a commission should prevent certain kinds of investment, and support others; issuing credit for the supply of needs by the use of more labour. Hitherto, all expenditure on "public works," conceived as a method of trade revival, has been used chiefly to relieve the pressure

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from shareholders or to restore a traditional rate of profit.

The new principle involves, secondly, an answer to the question, Who shall have public power for this purpose? The answer is—not any existing class or interest, not the proletariat, whatever that may be, nor the capitalist, if there is any such class. No class or group has any right to assume that it is the only or the chief guardian of the community or promoter of a classless society. Again, it must not be any irremovable “leader” or party immune from criticism. Continuous criticism is essential in a highly developed industrial system, even if it is less useful under primitive conditions. The public power should be exercised under the supervision of elected persons, reporting continuously to the general public and under criticism from anyone. Conceivably a new governing body may have to be established to organize production nationally or, in some of its aspects, internationally; but that is too difficult a policy to advocate at present. The more natural method for getting a new task performed is not to create a new body to do it, but to add powers to a body already existing. The best body in this instance is what is called the State, acting through the Government. Therefore, not because of any theory, but only in default of a better institution, the State must make the first move towards a plan for production.

Abstractions lead to mythology. The State is a dangerous phrase. There is no inevitable or natural

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function which "the State" has or has not. The real issue is, Who is to do a particular job? For example, when it was resolved to organize education under a public power, the persons called State officials and Ministers were given a new function hitherto performed partly by the churches, partly by voluntary associations. Education became a function of "The State," not because of the nature of the State, but because there was no other body generally believed to act for a whole community. Similarly, the co-ordination of production may be given as a function to the apparatus for public policy, now consisting of representative assemblies and civil services. There is no other body sufficiently neutral, sufficiently powerful, sufficiently understood to be aiming at common good. Most people believe that the State or the Government stands for the good of a whole community, even when, in fact, some gang or group takes control of the State. The State, therefore, must be used for the new job of organizing production.

## *Planning for Better Consumption*

Finally, the plan for production must be dominated by the will to increase the use or enjoyment of goods and services produced. That is to say, no "plan" is of any importance except in reference to the end for which the "plan" is conceived, in terms of consumption. There is no sense in planning production, until we have decided at least the preliminary question—the kind

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of consumption or use we desire to promote. And this is not an economic issue. The two kinds of consumption that are obviously in opposition to-day are (1) that of a society in which few have great amount of goods and services, while the great majority have only enough to maintain them as producers, and (2) that in which all have some share in goods and services which are more than is needed for the performance of their functions as producers. The extreme limit of the first type is a slave-society. The extreme limit of the second is a society of equals. Most communities at present are somewhere between these two limits. The productive system in the democratic tradition is partly organized so as to give "workers" just enough to eat and partly organized, under public authorities, to give consumers water and drains and roads that are good enough for anyone. The public policy now required in all production is an increase of the *second* type of organization, in which the needs or luxuries of consumers and users of services provide the dominant purpose of policy. No one denies that all producers who have to sell their wares do in fact consider the needs and tastes of consumers. Even the restriction of supply for the increase of profits is determined by consideration for *some* market. The real contrast between the two systems of production, then, lies in the nature of the community which is the result of one or the other. One supports a community in which most members have a bare subsistence and a few provide the market for large profits; the other

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supports a community in which all have more than enough, in which, therefore, no one is only a "producer." The large-scale marketing of cheap products in some modern shops appears to be a concession of the older system to the requirements of a new ideal; but this is an illusion, for in these also it is not the consumer's needs but the capital-owner's profits which dominate policy. No middle way is possible. Either the use of the products is the main aim of policy or it is not.

Plainly, then, the policy suggested for the organization of production is one in which the producer's interests are subordinate to those of the consumer, when all are consumers in the same sense. The food and clothes produced are not mainly means to more production, whoever uses them, but mainly opportunities of non-productive enjoyments; and the work to be done must be felt to be worth doing not for the gain derived from it by the worker, but for the sake of the life it makes possible in a community. No special virtue is required. All men always act from a variety of different motives; and even to-day a large number of quite ordinary workers carry on their work partly because of the enjoyment in doing it, partly because they feel it helpful to someone else, and only partly for the gain they derive from it. The so-called "economic" motive, personal gain in money, is one among many motives; and for some purposes the most important. But it is not the most important for public policy. It is not used as the chief motive in the

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army nor in other public services, nor in the professions. And, indeed, the attitude of the individual in any particular job is not so important as the standard expressed in the approval of his fellows. This standard must change. The community has to be made capable of expressing the approval of work done chiefly for its sake; and that may require the making of new types of men and women.

## *The Elimination of Slavery*

But the intellectual principles upon which a public policy for production should rest must be given motive force by the conditions associated with it. Here, again, we may learn from dictatorships without making their mistakes. Compulsory labour at low wages is given lofty names both in Russia and in the Fascist dictatorship. But in our tradition, too, we must make a step forward beyond the conception of labour as a source of income; we must put emotional force into the conception of labour as a public duty and as an acceptable, if not actually enjoyable, experience. The curse of the slave tradition, which all peoples have inherited, is that most manual work is regarded as slavish. As an official report, lapsing into social science, has put it, "One of the principal curses of slavery, apart from its immoral character and its economic failure, was the production of the slave mind. A human being accustomed to slavery



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when freed seems to have lost all incentive to work."<sup>1</sup> That will be our difficulty in all industrial policy. But such inertia can be overcome by a positive feeling that work is the enjoyable expenditure of energy in a common task. Millions of actual workers with their hands know this well enough, in spite of the reformers who suppose that all factories are jails; and millions even under existing half-slavish conditions, nevertheless, prefer to work rather than stand idle. Under suitable conditions most work necessary for the maintenance of civilized life can be enjoyable, as anyone may discover who speaks with coal-hewers or railwaymen or dockers or textile-workers or women cooking at home. Low wages, long hours, uncertainty of tenure, continuous confinement to one repetition job at machinery are not essential to industry. They are survivals of the slave-owning mentality in the organizers of factories. When these errors of organization are corrected, productive work should be enjoyed for its own sake by most normal men and women. It will be more generally enjoyed when public policy controls the kind of production required for the community and work at production is known not to be wasted for the advantage of profit-seekers. The spontaneous desire to serve other men arises as soon as the community makes proper provision for its servants. The public services at present suffer from the old slave-mentality, when they keep wages low and hours long in order to save the public funds.

<sup>1</sup> Report of the East Africa Commission; Cmd. 2387, 1925, p. 37.

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Those who work cannot be expected to work well simply under the spur of propaganda for "service," if they are treated as slaves. They must be free men and women treated as willing servants of the community.

But such emotion as can be associated with the release of energy is not enough to maintain a man at a job as long as may be necessary for the common good. The other element of emotion, therefore, must be similar to the soldier's, pride in working for a common purpose, which is approved by the society which surrounds him. Honour should be paid to the work which the community needs; and the worker will then feel his position to be honourable.

In the end, therefore, the efficacy of a public policy for production will depend upon the sentiments of the producers. It is quite impracticable to organize modern industry and agriculture by compelling men and women to do what they do not want to do. One element in policy, therefore, is cultivation or the spreading of new emotions as well as new ideas. Such policy aims at a lasting change, not at a violent revivalism. The dominant habit of mind among most producers should be transformed. And clearly it is not enough to *say* that work is desirable, if in practice the workers feel it to be oppressive. But even free work can be irritating, if the belief survives that all work is an enslavement. The supreme need for policy, therefore, is the creation of an enthusiasm or at least a cheerful appreciation of work done for a community, which all have a share in creating. Whatever sections

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of production remain still under the domination of the struggle for gain, public policy should aim at increasing the area over which another conception is dominant. Thus the challenge implied in the waste of productive power to-day may be met by an advance towards a new social system, farther from the slave tradition and nearer to equality and freedom for all.

In the transition from one type of system to another, it is not enough to persuade a few or to convince those in power. Even absolute dictatorships are compelled to organize "propaganda" in order to have their plans carried out. And the policy suggested here is not easier, it is more difficult than a dictator's order. It implies spontaneous co-operation by at least a sufficient number to prevent each step forward being taken as an opportunity for private enrichment by this or that person or group. Co-operation between a sufficient number who understand the purpose of public policy will be more powerful in the end than any blind, compulsory obedience to orders; and if the democratic tradition can do in times of peace even what it has done in times of war to make citizens feel their responsibility for the common task, then indeed will democracy be proved better than the specious alternatives to it now advertised.

## CHAPTER VII

### WEALTH IN THE USING

THE community to be created must be one which uses wealth well; and therefore policy cannot be confined to the mere supply of goods and services, because their use also requires conscious direction. The use of wealth is inevitably affected by public policy; but no conscious policy is, in practice, the *chief* cause of the way in which wealth is used in any community. That so much is spent on food, so much on clothing, and on a particular kind of food and clothing, is due to unconsciously accepted tradition. Indeed, most people assume that there is no real problem in the spending of their money because they believe that if they can get enough they will know how to spend it. The chief problem for most people is how to get enough—not merely enough money, but enough of what money can buy. And again, it is generally supposed that “Consumption” or use of goods and services is an individual or personal matter; for how can anyone else be concerned with what each one eats or wears? And yet it is not an accident that each eats and wears what the others expect him to eat and wear. Here, indeed, is an “invisible hand.” Consumption is extremely conventional. It is, in fact, more closely controlled by social forces than production; but these social forces do not operate through

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conscious public policy. Most people imagine that they are free to eat wheat or wear trousers, whereas, of course, they are controlled by the subconscious influences which form their tastes.

And so it is with the distinction between the standards of living of different social classes within any community. We have become accustomed to a society in which the great majority have only just enough to make them efficient as producers and a very few have more than enough to spare for the arts or the pleasures not essential to production. The distribution of wealth, therefore, in any community is still deeply influenced by the assumptions of a slave-society: for a slave is a person who is only a producer and is maintained by only just enough to make him produce more. A slave is an instrument of the civilized life of others. Clearly it is an exaggerated metaphor to say that the majority of wage-earners to-day are slaves. They do, in fact—largely through public policy in health and education—get more wealth than is just enough to make them producers. But the assumptions implied in the social standard inherited from slave-civilization still affect the distinction between the uses of income in different social classes. The conceptions implied in the phrases "the working class" and the "leisured class" are derived from slave-civilization; for if anyone is only a "worker" and any other only "leisured," the social situation is characteristic of slavery. Behind us lie the long centuries of conscious slavery; and far ahead of us lies the possibility of a community

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in which each person will have the use of more than enough for bare existence, more than enough to make him an efficient producer, more than enough for him to get whatever luxury is possible. In such a society there would be no distinction between a "working" class and a "leisured" class; for all would have leisure and the opportunities for using it freely, and all would do some work.

At present our society is in process of development from slavery to freedom, in the distribution and use of wealth; and apart from conscious policy, the increase in productive power has made it easier for the majority to have more than enough.

### *The Better Distribution of Wealth*

Public policy may resist the tendency towards a more equal distribution of wealth; or it may promote that tendency. The problem is, What sort of community do we desire to live in? Do we prefer a community with a few very rich families—the rest having only just enough? Or do we prefer a community in which the majority, if possible all, have more than enough—whatever may happen to the few rich? Such questions are not publicly and consciously asked; but they are really in the minds of those who discuss taxation and expenditure on social services. No one nowadays advocates poverty for others; no one advocates, as public policy, the reduction of wages to the "fodder basis." But many would be secretly uncomfortable

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if it were possible for most manual workers, for example, to work only four hours a day and yet have as much in goods and services as they now have. Leisure is still felt to be the privilege of a few—even by some workers who say that they would not know what to do with it if they had it.

The general tendency of public policy in the West until the appearance of Fascist dictatorship has been to support the more equal distribution of wealth—including leisure among the goods produced. In the first place, the mere support given to increased production led to a sort of spilling over of extra goods and services into the hands of those with low incomes. Prices fell owing to increased production; and therefore the "markets" for the new products were the smaller incomes and not so much those of the rich. The workers bought most of the new food and new clothing produced by early industry. That is to say, industrial production, being "mass" production, was necessarily production for "the masses"; and quite obviously the majority to-day in Western countries have better food, clothing, and houses than the majority had in the Middle Ages. The few also may be very much richer than the rich were then; but some approach to equality occurs when the rest are not actually starved to death. However, the accidental results of increased production in supporting a more equal distribution are not of the first importance.

The more important fact of the immediate past is that public policy during the past century has deliber-



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ately increased the share of goods and services available for those with low incomes. Water-supply and drainage cost money; and the use of these health services was made available for the poor. They are goods and services "in kind," which are used by those with low incomes as well as by the rich. Similarly, education and, later on, the feeding of school-children were, in fact, distributions of goods and services to those with low incomes. Their "real" incomes, therefore, increased. It was not done for the sake of a redistribution of wealth. But that makes no difference. The social services are, in practice, means of approaching that equality which lies ahead; and therefore means of departing from slavery for the majority. A more clearly conceived economic policy is that of taxation progressively increased in proportion to income and "estate" duties affecting the rich. Here, undoubtedly, the intention was to reduce the accumulations of wealth in private hands, besides placing more of the burden of the expenses of government upon the larger incomes. This policy of progressive taxation and "estate" duties must be considered in contrast with the methods of raising public income before the French Revolution, by pressure upon the very poorest. We tend to forget that most of the cost of government in earlier times, including the cost of wars, has been borne by peasants, having a bare sustenance, in the background of "glory"; and even now it is not by any means clear that the larger incomes pay a larger proportion of what their owners can afford

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than the poor pay. Taxes are still paid by the poor, in rents and the cost of food. But, on the whole, during the past century there has been a change to a policy favouring more equality.

## *The Survival of Slave-civilization*

The objections to such a policy are not all clearly stated; and some of them are, perhaps, not consciously grasped by those who stand for the old order. Economists who say that a more equal distribution of wealth would be impossible or disastrous to production are consciously or unconsciously disguising with economic terminology their dislike for social equality. Fascists who claim to know what is good for other people are hiding, not very adequately, their dislike of those who will not accept them as superior persons. Even some advocates of "leadership" in democracy really mean that it would never do for common folk to be indistinguishable from their noble friends. There is an ancient and widespread dislike for a society of equals. The "other fellow" is so obviously inferior!

Economic policy cannot do much to overcome this deep-set snobbery. Only education can change it. But it may be useful, before describing the kind of community which education can produce, to note what the social effects should be of a policy aiming at a more equal enjoyment of wealth. The most noticeable effects would be due to the luxuries, not to the adequacy of the supply of necessities—to

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the cinemas and swimming-pools for those with small incomes rather than to the larger supply of food for them. If all had opportunities for seeing and hearing the same kinds of entertainment, the members of the community would understand one another better. Their knowledge of what the other fellow was thinking and feeling would provide a substitute in the larger communities of to-day for the intimacy of the old face-to-face community in the village or city-state. Reformers often complain that nowadays the shoemaker cannot see the man who wears the shoes; and the wearer of the shoes never knows under what conditions the shoes are made—as it was possible to do in the old village-community. We cannot go back to the society of small craftsmen and local purchase. But a more equal sharing of entertainment and knowledge would create a general background of understanding among all the members of a larger community, especially if the entertainment arose out of reflections upon actual life. Therefore a community with a more equal distribution of luxuries, especially in the use of leisure, would be a more united community. It would be a large-scale unit, having the better qualities of intimacy and common feeling which were the natural results of personal contact in the old, small face-to-face communities.

Again, independence of mind and the ability to think for one's self are promoted by having an income secure enough and adequate enough to prevent

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fear of possible starvation. The pittance given to the unemployed in Great Britain has been inadequate; but even that little has lifted from the minds of many families the extreme fear of starvation and the tendency to recklessness or despair which exists when no provision at all is made by public policy. Thus once again a more equal distribution creates a less disturbed community.

Slave-revolutions are not common; and they have usually been suppressed. But extreme want next door to great wealth is an obvious cause of violence on one side or the other; and public policy has aimed at removing the cause of such violence. Thus a slave tradition, in which the majority of the members in any community receive only just enough to maintain them as workers or producers, has been unconsciously undermined. But the actual distribution of purchasing-power in the chief industrial communities still remains extremely unequal.

In Great Britain and Northern Ireland, a population in 1928 of about 45,600,000, of whom about 10,800,000 were below the age of fourteen, there were 139 personal incomes of over £100,000 a year; 2,900 personal incomes of over £20,000 a year; 104,500 of over £2,000 a year; and 14,875,000 of between £150 and £250 a year. This is the distribution among about twenty million personal incomes.<sup>1</sup>

In the United States in 1927, during "prosperity," about twelve million people, or one in every ten of

<sup>1</sup> Colin Clark: *The National Income*—1924-1931, p. 76.

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the population, had only bare subsistence; and about twenty million, or 16 per cent, had a minimum required for health. Only one in every ten in this rich country were well-to-do or rich.<sup>1</sup> The situation was much worse in 1933; but while want increased, more and more production was stopped, and more and more men and women kept idle. In spite of unconscious tendencies and conscious public policy supporting a more equal distribution of wealth, millions of men, women, and children have not enough for bare livelihood.

The problem for public policy is how far this situation should be improved, or in other words, how far a more equal distribution of wealth can be regarded as a common good. It is assumed, as it was argued in the preceding chapter, that each member of a community derives some gain from the food and clothing of those whose work each needs. And the gain is not merely "wealth," but also health and happiness, in so far as happiness is due to the friendly security in which each lives. Thus, if the poor have more food, not only the poor are better off; the whole community is made more healthy and vigorous. It is desirable therefore for every one, not merely for the poor, that more goods and services should be used by the majority in any community. Indeed, it is a major purpose for public policy not merely for redress of want, but also for the maintenance of the productive system.

<sup>1</sup> P. H. Nystrom: *Economic Principles of Consumption*.

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But policy has always been dominated by the idea that there is "not enough to go round." Even in our own days authoritative writers have used the old argument that the riches of all the rich, if divided among so many less rich, would make no noticeable difference to them. That is a bad argument against dividing; because however little all the poor gained, it may be just to give that little. Also, in fact, in Great Britain "the equal distribution of the national income, not including income from overseas, and with maintenance of the existing rate of investment would give an average family income of some £270 per annum to all, including the unemployed."<sup>1</sup>

But the most interesting aspect of the argument is the assumption that we are still living under an "economy of want." Those in control of industrial policy assume that we must be careful. But that implies ignorance of the modern power to produce—unless it implies the still more simple ignorance that money-values are not of fundamental importance in a world of surplus goods. Not money but food and clothing is what is needed by those with small incomes; and they need purchasing-power only in order to get food and clothing. If no means can be found to make them able to purchase, they may try to get what they need by other means. The real issue is the use of goods. Who is to have that use? That is the problem. All schemes for currency or credit reform are quite subordinate in importance to the major problem—

<sup>1</sup> Colin Clark: *The National Income*, p. 78.

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the consumption or use of actual goods and services. And the dominant conception to-day ought to be, not that we should be careful of a carefully divided little store, but that there is an excess of productive power available for every one.

Assuming that more than enough is available, or can easily be made available, for each to have a surplus of goods and leisure, should public policy aim at making it possible for each to have this surplus? Only the memory of slave-civilization prevents all members of the community answering—Yes. There is no valid argument against the proposal that each should have more than enough, in an "economy of surplus." There are unconscious resistances; for those with wealth to-day have power and they would lose power if others were not starving. But no one dares to give that as an argument against the redistribution of wealth.

## *Methods of Escape from Slave-civilization*

And if each should have this surplus, how is each to get it? What public policy will carry further the efforts of nineteenth-century social services and progressive taxation? The most obvious answer is that the policy should be one supporting a rise in "real" wages and salaries. This implies a contrast between income from wages and salaries and income from interest or profit on capital. Public policy, taxing "unearned" incomes more highly than "earned,"



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already recognizes this distinction. But the more general contrast is that between the rate of interest and the amount of income derived from work done. If the lower rate of interest leads to less investment, more money may be used for immediate purchases, even by the rich, and more may be available for those with low wages and salaries if public works are initiated while private investment decreases. Clearly a lower return from investment may injure some few older people with "savings" who have no earned income. But they can easily be helped by pensions, if they are unable to work; and in any case the amount they lose is insignificant by comparison with the amount gained by the millions of wage-earners. If prices are falling, a fixed rate of interest bears more hardly upon the majority in communities in which the value of the currency is fixed by reference to some unchanging standard, for example, gold. And therefore to "go off" gold may be one step in a policy for reducing the burden of interest on investments or loans. But the details of all these policies are discussed at length in many other books.

Here it is enough to note that the policy proposed is what is called "controlled inflation." It is not a good policy for every situation and for all time. But it is the only policy which is reasonable in a transition from the economy of scarcity to the economy of surplus. It is intended simply to bring into operation the powers to increase supplies primarily in order that supplies shall be used. Inflation, therefore, is

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not to be used for increase in profits but for increase in the amount of goods used. The test is not monetary. The proof of the success of such a policy will be the increase in the purchasing-power of those with low incomes, earned by their own work.

But besides thus directly affecting currency and credit and using these to control industrial production, policy should promote "public works." So much controversy and misunderstanding surrounds that phrase that it would be better to avoid it. But there is no better phrase. No one now proposes what used to be called "relief" works, that is to say, payment for quite useless activities simply to avoid gratuitous benefits. But the academic economists usually oppose "public" works by identifying them with "relief" works. They accept, perhaps unconsciously, but perhaps as a cover for their desire to befriend business men, the assumption that investment in private enterprise is good, but that investment in State or municipal funds is bad. They live in the mental atmosphere of a century ago, when the State was a boggy-man. But for the purpose of the argument here "public works" are simply productive enterprises whose main purpose is the provision of goods and services to all citizens equally; that is to say, they are "works" carrying further the principle already embodied in water-supply, drainage and roads.

The purpose of a public works policy cannot be stated in terms of money. Its purpose is not merely a separation of a given amount of money so that

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the rich should have less and the poor a larger share. A public works policy aims at a supply of goods and services by an increasing use of productive power; and distinctions between money-incomes may be misleading in the attempt to understand the supply of goods. For example, an income of £10,000 a year mathematically equals 100 incomes of £100 a year; but as a social force the £10,000 income has entirely different effects from those of the hundred incomes. Even in the physical sciences the irrelevance of merely quantitative differences for certain purposes is now admitted, in the quantum theory. But economists are still obsessed with the older mathematics. A man may be as heavy as ten babies; but ten babies do not make a man. An elephant may weigh as much as millions of fleas; but no quantity of fleas will make an elephant, and no subdivision of the elephant will produce a flea. Similarly, the £10,000 annual income is a unit different in other ways than quantity from the hundred incomes of £100. Each income is a whole, having a certain proportion of parts within it. The proportion, for example, spent on food is quite different in incomes of different amount. Incomes of £100 a year are spent mainly on food; and incomes of £10,000 a year mainly not on food. A public works policy must be based upon these non-quantitative distinctions, because it is part of a policy for health and happiness and is not a policy for wealth alone. Hence it is concerned with the supply of those goods which are purchased by small incomes; and it pro-

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motes the use of these goods by increasing the production of them. But it pays its way in the same sense as public water-supply pays its way. It is not only an extension of benefits like education, although this kind of benefit also may be part of public policy; for a public works policy aims at increasing the proportion of paid work done for the majority by the majority. Incidentally, it may decrease the proportion of paid work done for those with high incomes. It may, for example, reduce the number of footmen and maid-servants. But that is of no importance if it increases the supply of roadmakers and house-builders and clothing-workers. The payment of the builders thus comes from the incomes of the clothing-workers and vice versa. The "market" for a public works policy is the large market of low incomes still hardly envisaged by the traditional politician.

The "works" which public policy should promote should naturally be different at different times in different countries. But in Great Britain it is generally agreed that housing would be a good example of public works at present. Unfortunately, however, the housing of those with the lowest incomes is generally regarded as a sort of "charity." Their rents are supposed to be subsidized; and in some cases, where rents for new houses are high, the lowest incomes have not been enough for an adequate food supply to be obtained by the family; and we have had the ridiculous result of public policy that people starve in better houses. But there is no reason why rents should be

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high nor even subsidized, if housing policy were less traditional. There is no reason why a housing policy should not "pay," if it were conceived on an adequate scale. If large enough districts, properly selected, were developed by public funds, incidental increases in land values, which now add to the incomes of private owners, would more than suffice for allowing low rents. The whole conception of "housing" as charity for the poor must be transformed. The plan must envisage a whole community, exactly as water-supply or drainage does. No one's house should stand outside the common plan; and no special district should be conceived as a "housing area." But again, the details are discussed in other books. The principle of policy is the issue here. The whole community must be the basis of a housing policy.

But "housing" is too narrow a basis for a policy based upon consumption or use of goods and services. Food is not adequate and clothing is bad in the case of most families. To restrict milk supply or the supply of cotton, simply in order to increase incomes of farmers and agricultural workers, is as foolish as to increase food supply simply for the advantage of industrial producers, as in the nineteenth century. Public policy for the use of goods must be on a larger scale than any adopted hitherto. But there are already institutions of three kinds, local, national, and international, which could be used in economic policy. A public works programme for supply would have three aspects, local in housing, national in some form

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of transport, and international in foodstuffs or some kinds of clothing. The organizations which already exist have never been used on an adequate scale. The needs of the peoples of the world have never been made the basis of public policy.

### *The Education of the Consumer*

Outside the State-organizations for the protection of the consumer and the promotion of his interests, there are the Consumers' Co-operative Societies of many countries. These have a part to play in the development of a public policy aiming at the increased use of available goods. But they, like any group which advocates public action based upon surplus and consumption rather than upon want and production, have to contend with the deep-seated prejudice against regarding bacon, for example, as something to be eaten rather than as something to be sold. And this "economic" obsession is itself supported by the quite baseless assumption that every one knows what to do with anything he can get. The education of the consumer is so little advanced that no consumer believes that he needs education. Even the Consumers' Co-operative Societies have been very conventional in their supply of furniture, clothing, and food. They have generally tried to distribute imitations of middle-class taste to those with lower incomes. They have not educated their members in the more modern uses of houses, or clothing, or food.

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Neither public authorities nor private societies are sufficiently aware of the incompetence in the use of wealth embodied in the traditional customs and social standards. Not merely distribution but the use of purchasing power is defective in contemporary society. Not one in a thousand knows how to use his income with good effect for health or happiness.

As a preliminary, therefore, to any policy for increasing the goods and services available for those with small incomes, there should be some conscious organized effort at the education of the consumer. Neither the rich nor the poor are skilful in the use of what they have. The majority of the rich are vulgar and primitive in their appetites; and most of the poor waste what little they have. This is due to bad education, of which more will be said in the next chapter. But the defects in the arts of using wealth can also be corrected by a public policy directing the sort of goods and services which are to be made available. Diet, clothing, and housing are problems of art, not science; although scientific knowledge is the basis for the art of living, as the science of perspective may be useful in painting pictures. Both in science, then, and in art the food-supply, the clothing, and the dwellings and streets of a whole community are matters for consideration in public policy. In the nineteenth century the law controlled adulteration, the fraudulent use of material for clothing and the cubic space for rooms. Now we should go further, because much more is now known. Certain kinds of food—for example,



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milk and fruit—new kinds of clothing, at least for children, and houses that are not dark dens for cave-dwellers may be the conscious purposes of public policy. The daily life of a community and its needs should not be left entirely in the control of unconscious traditional customs. The sense of community should be enough to make it at least of interest to each to observe how the other lives; and more of life might then be lived in common, when each man's habits are less like his primitive ancestor's. The fine arts would then also be the concern of public authorities or societies within the community, at work upon remaking the old order. But music and works of plastic art—already provided by some public authorities—would not be conceived as useless ornaments or entertainments. No fine art is anything but an impertinence, if the basic arts of living—in cooking and clothing—are quite unconnected with them.<sup>1</sup> Public buildings and other properties, civic, national and international, are in the care of public policy; but indeed also the city streets and houses, the nation's roads and harbours and the whole earth as a place for human adventure and enjoyment, with all the national goods it provides, may be included in the purview of one or other body organized for public policy.

<sup>1</sup> It would be amusing to ask city councillors why they buy oil paintings for the city gallery, or pay for bands in the parks, in cities where the streets are disgracefully mean and ugly and the noises are barbaric. Perhaps it would be useful also to ask the artists why they want to sell their wares, if they do nothing to make a community able to appreciate them.

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### *Economic Policy for the Common Good*

Thus one comprehensive policy for the use of wealth includes provision of amenities and luxuries for all, control of supplies for the ordinary needs of living, the better education of the consumer in the use of what is available and measures tending to distribute more equally the private purchasing-power which each enjoys. The steps already made in distributing good water and drainage as well as education have greatly improved the kind of men and women who make a community. Life is more secure and serene and intercourse easier than it was in former centuries. Carried somewhat further, a more equal income for all would make a society of men and women, none of whom would dare to condescend to "the poor" and none of whom need cringe to others with higher incomes. Manners would change. In a small town, for example, in France, or America, or Scandinavia, where there are no rich and no poor, but every one has enough for security and simple luxuries, the manners are quite different from those common in Paris, or London, or New York. There is less formality; perhaps, also, less fear of others; and much more general sharing of whatever views and news may exist. The level of manners in a more equal society may be lower, if education does not raise the level. But for the argument here, so far as economic equality is concerned, it is asserted only that the manners of equals would be very different from the

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manners of traditional "good form." A vague feeling that this would be so induces some people to oppose any approach to economic equality; for such people enjoy looking up to their "betters" almost as much as they enjoy looking down on the rest. Conscious resistance to social equality is now organized in dictatorship by a party membership of superior persons and an adoration of "leaders" and "under-leaders." But policy in the democratic tradition may appeal to more civilized tastes.

Finally, a more equal sharing of economic wealth would mean that a larger proportion of wealth (as in roads and parks) was obviously "common" in the sense that it was maintained by public policy and used by all and sundry. But the sense that this large proportion of what was enjoyed was, in that definite sense, "common" good would greatly increase the feeling of responsibility for the community and of devotion to the community. Private wealth would then attract less attention. The appetite for private gain would be less widespread and less virulent. Not that men and women would necessarily become more virtuous. That is not the point. But they would feel more satisfaction in those forms of good which can be most easily obtained in common. A private garden, for example, may be an excellent thing to possess and enjoy; but the enjoyment to be derived from a great public park with swimming-pools and playgrounds is quite different from the enjoyment of one's own backyard. It is not more virtuous to

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prefer a public park; but such preference does indeed make a different sort of community. For example, those with low incomes who are to be found in the Frankfurt Stadium, swimming or sitting under pines, among hundreds of others, are quite different from those with similar incomes in West Ham, each staring at a separate footpath and grass patch at his own door. The publicly provided amenities in British and American cities are much greater than they were; but they do not yet dominate the imagination of the citizens. They are still felt to be merely asides or irrelevancies in the division of wealth among shops and houses. A policy aiming at a greater proportion of wealth embodied in public possessions is, therefore, also aiming at the formation of a more intense and conscious life in common; but the intensity of that life depends upon the actual experience of ordinary persons who enjoy common goods.

The chief obstacle to the success of such a policy to-day is the defective imagination of those in control in public affairs, locally and in central government, both among officials and elected representatives. The dominant majority among them still assume one of the two old attitudes; they think either in terms of charity or in terms of a share of the swag, whenever they consider public social services. Thus "housing of the working-classes," for example, is frequently spoken of by Conservatives as if it were a kindness to the poor, and by their opponents as if it were a sort of revenge upon the rich for living in large houses.

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But social services are neither charities nor punishments. They are services of a whole community, provided by the co-operation of a whole community exactly as we have now come to regard water-supply. The policy suggested here, therefore, should derive motive force from a conception of the community which would be created by the use of wealth in a new way. It must be generally and enthusiastically felt that every member of the community gains if there are no slums in a city or no insanitary hovels in rural areas, and if the streets in poorer quarters are nobler than any in the rich quarters to-day. But even as a physical object the city is not "felt" as a whole. Each man tends to regard his own dwelling as his "interest," surrounded by thousands of other dwellings regarded as unconnected units. Even "street architecture" has disappeared. Town-planning seems to be confined to putting little boxes at various angles, and planting trees between them. No public buildings, no common meeting-places are in the plan. Indeed, the new housing areas are merely sleeping-boxes arranged in rows, with no unity of their own and no place for a life in common. In some such areas community centres have been created by the residents to supply their own need for common enjoyment or interest; but no public policy has yet expressed the unity of all the citizens in any city-area in their ways of living.

Similarly, in the larger community called the nation, although economists use an abstraction called "the

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national income," it is merely a mathematical addition of disparate units. National parks exist, and national collections for science and art. The road system is "national"; and there is an ancient and primitive pride in the armed forces of the nation. But even the State's expenditure is not conceived as that of a single household whose members share equally in one whole complex of goods and services. The use of wealth for the whole nation is beyond the range of current imagination, and still further beyond is the conception of a family of nations, all of them mainly workers with their hands in all the countries of the world sharing the enjoyment of goods and services. It would be, however, a step forward if public policy for the use of wealth envisaged even the face-to-face community of ordinary folk in any area.

Another obstacle to the public policy for the better use of goods by a community is the general ignorance of the need for skill in such use. In modern communities we are only just beginning to study diet and clothing: that is to say, we are only just able to see that what one pays for bacon is less important than what one does with it when it is bought. Custom is no better guide in cooking for households than it is in feeding pigs. Indeed, there is no general understanding of the facts with regard to preservation or manipulation of foodstuffs, no intelligence with regard to "family" meals, and an almost superstitious hostility to any criticism of traditional clothing. This traditionalism must be overcome before any

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general enthusiasm can be created for the use of wealth in new ways.

Public policy, however, with respect to the use of goods or of leisure is in the hands of the citizens themselves. Not even an infallible dictator can do the digestion of food for common folk, and not even faithful followers can eat at the same rate as a leader. A policy for the use of wealth as a common good is therefore necessarily "democratic" in its basis. Not "directions as to use" but individual skill in the use of wealth, private and public, is the real force in public policy for taking advantage of the new productive power. It follows that, even if more food or more cinemas are made available for each of us, none of will derive advantage from the addition to our incomes unless we are better educated.



## CHAPTER VIII

### EDUCATION MAKES A COMMUNITY

OF the two purposes of education—to make a person fit for the world as it is and to make him able to change it—the second is the more important. But an education for changing the world would be very different from any that we have inherited; for all education hitherto has been a method of moulding the new generation into the shapes admired by the old; and the old generally prefer things as they are. Education, therefore, has been a stabilizing rather than a progressive element in social life.

For public policy education is conceived as the conscious process by which the existing community adjusts to its needs the new generation. But such a conception implies that the needs of the existing community are dominant; and indeed, so far as the bases of custom and belief are concerned, they should be so. No progress is possible unless the gains already secured are preserved. No civilized life can endure unless the clearings already made in the barbarism of impulse are protected against the encroachment of the jungle. Mathematics cannot be improved, unless simple addition is understood. And yet, the past has not the whole store of truth or goodness or beauty. Existing customs and beliefs, natural in a community lately removed from primitive barbarism, may be quite unsuitable for more subtle relationships and

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finer purposes. Preservation of the knowledge and skill already acquired is obviously not enough for the facing of new issues. Therefore, although the bases of custom and belief in the existing community must be preserved by education, the structure above them may have to be remodelled or rebuilt. And therefore education should provide not only maintenance of the bases, but imagination and skill to build above them. It should give to the new generation ability to face new issues in new ways. And that involves more than supplying the knowledge and skill which is barely necessary for doing one's job. Education for all men should be a luxury, giving what is more than just enough. It should make new men and women in a new community, not merely workers or their employers and governors.

### *The Education of a Caste-society*

The education of a gentleman, as it is called in Great Britain, was always conceived as a luxury. This is what was meant by "liberal," as opposed to utilitarian, education. It was assumed that a gentleman had more knowledge and skill than were required to earn a living. The graces of life were supposed to be acquired with the "public school" tradition; and even ladies, when "finished," had acquired some accomplishments, such as piano-playing, which were supposed to be more than merely useful. The education of an upper class in a slave-society is always a luxury. It is part of that leisure which is assumed to be the privilege of

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the few; and the rest are not supposed to be "educated" in that sense. They may be trained technicians, but not, in the full sense of the word, educated. And if their training for use, as in the case of horses, can be called education, it is conceived to be practical or utilitarian, not "liberal." Thus when, as it will be shown below, education was first given to "working" classes it was necessarily a different sort of education from that of gentlemen—not a luxury, but a necessity. It was assumed that the working classes needed education in order to be efficient workers, but not in order to make them capable of civilized leisure.

Two distinct kinds of education are still assumed, by those in power, to be maintained by public policy: one education which is a luxury—the education of ladies and gentlemen—and the other an education in bare necessities for the "lower" classes. That distinction is embodied in the school-system of Great Britain; and it is assumed in the slave-owner mentality of the members of the Committee on National Expenditure of 1931. The Report of that Committee says: "Since the standard of education, elementary and secondary, that is being given to the child of poor parents is already in very many cases superior to that which the middle-class parent is providing for his own child, we feel that it is time to pause in this policy of expansion."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cmd. 3920, 1931, section 502. This was signed by Sir George May (Prudential Assurance Company), Sir Thomas Royden (Cunard S.S. Company), Lord Plender (an accountant), P. Ashley Cooper, and Sir Mark W. Jenkinson.

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The signatories evidently believe that education is "given," as a sort of charity, to the poor and "provided" for themselves by the middle classes; that there are two kinds of education, one of which ought to be "superior," and that public policy ought to prevent the "lower" education from becoming as good as that for the middle classes. It is not clear whether the "middle" classes are the "upper" classes in the minds of the gentlemen who proposed to save money on the education of the poor. But it is quite clear that education is supposed by them to preserve the division of the nation into two distinct orders or ranks. That is to say, education is to *prevent the formation of one community of equals*. The State is to resist in public policy the tendency towards a more equal distribution of knowledge and skill, so that "the children of poor parents" may be permanently inferior to those of the middle classes. The community of the future, which is being formed by the new generation now at school, is to be one of men and women who from their earliest years have been trained in two distinct classes, inferior and superior. There could be no clearer proof that, in the minds of persons educated in the "best" schools of the past, education for the rest of the community should be a bare necessity for making efficient workers, not a luxury.

Evidently the preliminary question has not been asked. Is the education in the State schools for the advantage of the whole community? Is it good for any man that others should be educated? Not if

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education is mainly a means of getting the better of others in a general scramble. If schools are intended chiefly to train each person in using his wits to get as much as he can for himself, then it is unfortunate that so many go to school. Why increase the competition? And more pointedly it is asked: Why improve the chances in the struggle for gain of the children of working-class parents, who may, if they go to school, get the better of their "betters"? It is still more "unfair" to give such children the chance of making larger incomes by sending them to universities! There will not be "enough to go round," if so many are scrambling for scraps!

Perhaps, however, education for the working class is good for the whole community, but only in so far as it makes efficient workers? Perhaps education is a common good only if it keeps people in their places to serve the community as inferiors or superiors? This is the assumption which still survives, perhaps unconsciously, in the discussion of educational policy.

## *Survivals of the Past in Education*

Education has always been conceived as, in some sense, a common good. Even the education of a select caste was assumed to be for the good of the whole community, who would derive advantage from the knowledge and skill of priests and doctors. Thus it is assumed that the superior knowledge and skill given to the

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few by education is not for their advantage only. The good of the other members of a community is supposed to be derived from the good acquired by any class. In any community the specialist in skill or knowledge does not share his good by making everyone else a specialist. He shares it by conferring upon others the results of a process which they would be unable to use. And in more primitive communities all education, in the sense of schooling, is a sort of specialism. A school was once a place of apprenticeship in a particular trade or occupation—not for girls, nor for all boys—but for a “clerical” class with a vocation. That was the mediaeval system. What was taught in the Middle Ages was learned language—reading and writing as means of communication in the specialist community of those who knew the larger issues which were not directly the concern of ordinary folk. Clearly the educated were supposed to give service to their fellows. Some even said that the “upper” class should not derive wealth from such services; but in any case, wealth for themselves was not the purpose for which the educated had received education. Thus even the education which was a privilege for a few was regarded as a good for the whole community; and this is the normal attitude in the public school tradition in England. But the unconscious influence of the mediaeval tradition confuses, in the minds of those now in control of public policy, two quite different things: one is the education of the specialist, based upon personal aptitude, and

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the other is the education of a caste, based upon birth and wealth. There is no reason at all for the second sort of education in the modern world.

Our educational system has undergone many changes since the Middle Ages; but the atmosphere of the education of a privileged or specialist class still survives in our schools—in the division of “class” schools from State schools, and in the teaching. That ancient atmosphere is, perhaps unconsciously, breathed by some officials in the State departments of education, who have been trained in superior schools for an “upper” class and in ancient universities.<sup>1</sup> It is to be felt in the assumptions, generally unnoticed, underlying the speeches made by Ministers of Education, who have been trained in the “superior” orders. It invades even the opinions of some teachers in the State schools, who are snobs. And all this does not involve “wickedness,” nor “the capitalist system.” It is simply the result of the early history of education. Modern reforms do not always remove the atmosphere surrounding an ancient institution. The effects of subconscious tendencies inherited from the past confirm such an obsolete point of view as that expressed by the Report quoted above. Policy is still deeply affected by unexamined assumptions in reference to social ideals.

<sup>1</sup> It should be noted, however, that the attitude of business men and politicians, expressed in the words of the Report quoted above, is not that of all the officials in education departments. Indeed, in the United States and Great Britain some of these officials are active in new policies.



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### *Earlier Progress in Educational Policy*

In order to decide on public policy to-day, however, a short assessment must be made of the changes already introduced into the ancient system and method of education. The most revolutionary change was made when, in the middle of the nineteenth century, policy was based upon the new idea that schools should be used by all the members of the community. But some changes had been made even before then. In the Middle Ages schools were for the use of a "class"; but the class was not the ruling class. Schools were for secretaries and agents, not for principals in the control of public policy. Knights and kings did not read and write. They had what they believed to be more important functions; and they used inferiors to keep accounts or to write chronicles and State papers. At a later stage the ruling class found it convenient to learn to read and write for themselves; but until about the eighteenth century in England tutors at home, not schools, were the means for the education of gentlemen and ladies. Eton was still for the less wealthy, if not for the poor, in Queen Anne's time. But the teaching at Eton became so good, as compared with that given by most tutors, that even the rich and lordly began to go to school there. Thus the ruling class was compelled to learn at school what only inferior agents and secretaries had hitherto learnt. And perhaps later on, the State schools may become, in the same way, so good that

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the "upper" classes will find it inconvenient to stay away.

In the nineteenth century education was desired for all gentlemen and ladies; but it still consisted of language study—chiefly reading and writing and translations of the languages of a dead slave-civilization, whose literature unconsciously moulded the attitude of the ruling class, in confirmation of the superior airs of an educated or leisured class in a slave-owning culture. However, the new industry needed more intelligent workers; and a revived Protestantism needed Bible-readers. Therefore education was spread by charity schools. Humanitarianism and the obvious advantage of having workers who could read written directions led to a public policy for education. A revolution occurred. The State took over the charity schools and added more. The whole population was to be sent to school. But, in the first place, the "lower" orders were not to be given the education of gentlemen and ladies. The schools for an upper class were left undisturbed. The State schools were for "the rest," and were not therefore intended for education in the same sense as the private "public" schools understood it. The "lower" orders were to be taught what was useful, not ornamental. They were to be made, by education, more efficient producers and, in politics, better choosers between upper-class candidates for power. Education for them was regarded as a gift to them, not of a luxury, but of a bare necessity. Therefore

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it had to consist of the bare minimum required for the "lower" orders to fulfil their functions in society. And, in the second place, the State schools were to give a restricted form of the old traditional "clerk's" education—not a new form of training, but a part of the old reading, writing, and arithmetic. Why anyone should teach a future agricultural labourer or textile worker what had been found useful for a mediaeval cleric—that no one asked. Education was assumed to consist of reading, writing and arithmetic; and to spread education meant only distributing small doses of the same mixture. The unexamined assumptions were important; for they implied that education was principally a handing-on of abstract knowledge through language, and that different amounts of this knowledge should be given to different social classes. But no one in power noticed the effects of the assumptions implied in this new system. The assumption that there should be a different set of schools for the poor or the wage-earners really confirmed the division of the community into segregate classes or castes. Equality of manners is impossible in a society whose members attend different caste or class schools. But the State in the nineteenth century, in England most obviously, adopted a policy which obstructed by its system of education any approach to equality and, indeed, prevented even that common feeling which had existed in the past, when neither the labourer nor his master had been to school. Now each was carefully segregated into a separate school system.

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But no one examined the assumption implied in such a policy.

The other assumption, that an "educated" man is a sort of clerk or secretary who is able to read and write, inevitably confirmed the old disdain for manual labour natural to a slave-civilization. The child of the labourer, when at school, never heard of skill in ploughing or in the use of a lathe or a loom. Those were jobs for the uneducated! Education dealt only with what clerks did in offices.<sup>1</sup> It was not strange, therefore, that either reading and writing were soon forgotten and regarded as futile when the child had left school or they were accepted as the tests of culture and all the skill and artistry of ordinary service in production were despised as "slave's" work. The methods of education confirmed the worst features of the society which education might have improved. Traditional education, even after the reforms of the nineteenth century, obstructed progress.

This is not a complaint against our forefathers. They made a very generous effort to give to others what they thought best. But, owing to certain unconscious assumptions, they gave the wrong thing and gave it badly! We can now do more effectually what they intended to do.

<sup>1</sup> The most obvious result was in India and other non-European countries where European mediaeval cleric's education produced an unemployed clerks' class, which was incompetent at most of the work necessary for civilized life and also disdainful of that work.

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### *The Latest Revolution in Educational Policy*

But a second change occurred after the nineteenth century in Great Britain and other democratic countries. About 1900 a silent and partly unconscious revolution took place in educational *method*, so far as young children were concerned; and in Great Britain an important change took place in the *system* of State education. In *method* it was discovered that education must be a training of the whole person, which required the use of the hand and of bodily movement. The old "three R's" were seen to be irrelevant for young children, if not actually dangerous. Drawing and crafts, singing and dancing, began to be used in schools; and the State schools in all democratic countries were in the front rank in the use of the new methods. At the same time what happened in schools was made interesting to children. Schools ceased to be so much like prisons as they had been. And, therefore, in modern schools there is no difficulty about truancy; nor are school attendance officers as useful as they were, because children actually enjoy going to school and parents appreciate schooling. But the new methods used in the schools for children of miners and railwaymen and dockers involved treating their education as an education of the whole person of a human being, not of a "lower" caste; nor of "producers" or "workers." Indeed, in some parts of Great Britain and America the State schools for young children are now giving a better education than

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the conventional schools for an upper class supported by the private funds of the select. It is now an established rule that children in the State schools should be given education according to the very best methods for training the whole person. But that is education as a luxury! At about the same time it was discovered that a child's body as well as its mind must be the concern of education. The feeding of school-children, adopted as public policy in Great Britain under the Act of 1908, has meant very much more than a mere help for the poor. In areas where the education authorities were intelligent the health of all the children was improved. The school doctor and the treatment for eyes and teeth as well as the better understanding of health and diet among parents have completely changed the old situation. Children of parents with low incomes are no longer hampered by unskilful feeding or ignorant neglect. There are fewer diseases of childhood; and, above all, the children in the State schools in general have much more vitality and vigour than ever before. Poverty still cramps the development of thousands of the new generation. But educational policy deliberately attempts to counteract the effects of poverty upon the body as well as the mind. It is no longer true in fact, although it is still assumed by many, that the State schools are training only workers. The education given in them is a luxury, and ought to be so. It is training men and women for something more than merely doing work.

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This implies a revolution: for the men and women who have been so trained in childhood are not likely to be a "lower" class or a "working" class of quite the same kind as their ancestors or parents. But no one yet knows what the social effects will be, now that the three R's and the old charity education have been submerged in a new and nobler conception.

Another great change was a change in the system. About 1900 in England secondary, and later university, education were introduced for those who were thought able to benefit by it among the children of poorer families. Scholarships and bursaries have long existed in the educational system. Even in the Middle Ages the villein's son could become a cleric and a bishop. But the new system differed a little from the old. In the first place, the scholars who were "creamed off" and kept longer at school were sent to new schools, not generally to the privately controlled older secondary schools; and new universities, in England at any rate, changed in various ways the conventional system of the mediaeval universities. But these changes were not revolutionary. They belonged in principle to the stage of social thought in which it is assumed that the "bright" child rises out of his own social circle into an upper air breathed by gentlemen and ladies, or passable imitations of them. That is to say, secondary and university education for the child of poor parents was not conceived to decrease the social distance between the manual



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worker and the "master," but only to open a career to the talent for getting on. The clever youth was supposed to desert the circles in which he had been born. Society helped him to climb. On the whole, therefore, the change of *system* involved in giving a more advanced education to a selected few of the poorer classes was not as important as the change of *method* which transformed the very nature of education for all. The "creaming off" of a selected few led to a deeper depression among those left behind; but the new method of training the whole person, body and mind together, really undermined the traditional assumption that the lower classes should have an inferior kind of education.

## *The New System of Education*

All these changes have left education, so far as it is directly affected by public policy, quite different from what it was thirty years ago. Public policy to-day, therefore, should rest upon new assumptions. The State schools train the whole person, in a living community, of all who attend. They are, therefore, schools suitable for *all* the future citizens of the nation, not only for one class, nor for those only who have low incomes. These schools are not used by those with higher incomes, partly because they are not yet good enough in their own way, but mainly because so much snobbery survives. The aim of public policy should be to make all the State schools

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the best schools for every one. Therefore, educational policy should improve the system by decreasing the size of classes, raising the status and increasing the payment of teachers, erecting modern buildings with modern appliances, and expanding the playgrounds and leisure activities connected with schools. The details of reform should, however, be consciously subordinated to the final purpose of making one community in all the schools. It may be assumed that the reorganization of the school system in Great Britain proposed by the Hadow Committee will proceed further and faster. And it should be taken for granted that public policy should raise the school-leaving age. There are many arguments in its favour and none—except cost—against it. But this is not the place to discuss a programme for educational policy. Any programme should be dominated by an entirely new conception of the place of the educational system in the creation of a new community. The traditional system, assuming the continuance of a privileged caste and inferior orders, is irreconcilable with the ideals of democracy. It survives only by the influence of unconscious habit; and that influence is waning. If it is not replaced by a conscious purpose, the rivalries of conflicting castes or classes will destroy the community. Therefore the educational system and educational policy are crucial in replying to the challenge to democracy. In our judgment of what the schools are now doing, we are, in fact, challenged by the conditions created during the past century. If

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we are not to lose all that has been so far gained we must advance further.

Educational method, however, is still dominated by the mediaeval conception of the educated person as one who can read and write. Reading and writing are very useful; but they are not fundamental to the whole structure of society. All human beings need, first of all, food, clothing, and shelter; and the activities by which these are supplied are not despicable nor degrading. Also the ideal in view is a community in which all necessary work is honourable; in which, therefore, the clerk or the teacher is in no way superior to the railway engine-driver or the textile worker. The schools are intended to "educate" real engine-drivers, and not only imitations of clerks or teachers. Therefore the basis of education should be occupational activities—the growing of foodstuffs, weaving and building. Teachers of the older sort, who can train only imitations of themselves, will have to be replaced. Examination questions will be no longer the tests of success of any person or school. Those who proceed to secondary schools and universities will have had actual experience of the ordinary processes of production. And all men and women will learn to honour what they understand, when they see other people doing it. The pen may be mightier than the sword; but the spade and the needle are better than either, even as instruments of education.

The fundamental issue in educational policy is like that in health policy and in economic policy. The

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assumptions unconsciously operative in maintaining the traditional system are no longer regarded as valid. They do not even represent what is actually implied in the practice of to-day. The assumptions of slave-civilization and of "caste" education are irrelevant for the new methods of education; because a person trained in the new way cannot be treated as a mere instrument for the culture of others. But the alternative is not clearly conceived. There is no dominant conception of education as the process of creating a new way of living in common, nor of the kind of community which modern education can most easily create. Here and there in the school-system, among some few teachers and parents, there is an understanding of the real issue; but politicians who speak about education are more concerned with the cost of schools or with the number of years spent at school than with the more fundamental question of the purpose of the whole educational system. This, and not questions of cost or time, is the urgent question which must be answered by those who still believe in the democratic tradition. It is quite impossible to go on with the old hand-to-mouth reforms of an obsolete tradition.

## *The Next Step in Public Policy*

In the dictatorships the educational system is recognized to be the crucial problem of public policy; and it is correctly understood to include, not merely

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schools for children, but all those institutions by which adults are brought to an appreciation of the life of their community. In a dictatorship the party in control decides upon the nature of the community which the educational system is to establish. In Russia it is a community dominated by manual workers; and in Germany and Italy a community arranged in the old mediaeval subordination to "leaders." No free discussion of the ideal is permitted in any dictatorship; still less is it promoted by education. What is taught is fixed beforehand as the truth revealed to infallible leaders; and in all dictatorships opposition to "foreign" influence is resisted—by warlike preparations among Fascists, and by organizing opinion hostile to foreign Governments in Russia. But in all dictatorships service to the community and not personal gain is the dominant ideal inculcated; and in all of them the modern methods and instruments of instruction, cinema, radio, and the rest, are used for one clearly conceived purpose—the formation of a new kind of life in common. Each member of the community is made to feel that he has a part to play in a life which is deeper and more noble than his own immediate needs or personal desires would indicate. And new communities dominated by mediaeval dogmatism and the gospel of segregation are actually being created to-day by the dictatorships.

What have the countries of the democratic tradition to offer instead of this to their new generation? Is

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it only an admiration for the past? Is it only an equal chance for every one in a general scramble for private gain? Is the educational system, in school and after, only to teach every person the tricks for "getting on" or at best to make each satisfied to keep the old show running? If that is all, the most vigorous men and women in the new generation will prefer dictatorship. But, as the argument above has shown, within the democratic tradition we have already made two great advances in educational policy. First, a limited form of the old education was distributed generally; and afterwards a new method and system were established, which implied a new conception of education for a whole community. Now, therefore we can make the next step.

The ideal aimed at in educational policy ought to be the deliberate formation of a community of equals, each of whom enjoys all the luxuries of knowledge, skill and culture, besides such training as will fit each to play a part in the common life. And for this purpose, in defiance of mediaeval authoritarianism under dictators, it is necessary that discussion of all possible opinions should be promoted in education, that all teachers and "leaders" should be freely criticized, that no fixed order of precedence should be granted to any class or group, and that all foreign contacts should be welcomed. A nobler and more living community can thus be formed than by an established orthodoxy.

The purpose of this policy is not merely to give to the poor or the ignorant what is now enjoyed by the

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rich and the learned. The purpose is far more radical. It is to remove the incompetence in the art of living in society, which is now prevalent in all circles; and to eliminate the evil characteristics of existing riches and traditional learning. Riches are too eagerly sought for private enjoyment; and learning is still affected by the obsolete slave-owner's idea that railwaymen and postmen are inferior persons who are instruments of the contemplative life of a select few. The chief purpose of educational policy is not the sharing of a tradition which already exists, but the creation of life in a community that does not exist. The purpose is the formation of a new way of living in common with others.

In that new community all personal activity will have its place in the life of the whole. Each occupation will be an honourable function, a service of a common purpose—the maintenance and progress of civilized life. One man's job will not be more respectable or noble than another's. But all will be levelled up; none will be levelled down. The docker is as clearly a servant of the community as the surgeon or the Prime Minister; and because the school is to make this new community out of the children of to-day, all schools should be in one system for all the new generation without distinction of the incomes or the functions of parents. The schools of to-day should be chiefly concerned with the formation of a new generation which will have the ability to make that life in common for themselves.



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Education, however, is not only a matter for schools and universities; nor is it only the new generation which needs education. In a community which assumes the correctness of traditional customs and beliefs it may not be necessary to provide for a positive instruction and training in citizenship. The majority in such circumstances may absorb unconsciously the standards which control "what no fellow can do." And so it has been argued that in Great Britain the traditional loyalties have survived without any conscious or concerted effort to maintain them.<sup>1</sup> But the new situation requires that a common purpose should be clearly conceived and deeply felt by as many as possible. And that common purpose should therefore be made into a motive force by "propaganda" in its widest sense. It is futile only to lecture to those who attend lectures on the machinery of government or their duties as voters. The real question is—What is it all *for*? And the answer cannot be given in a formula, still less in a description of things as they are. The kind of answer required is quite well understood when war breaks out. Then every Government puts passion into its appeals and idealizes its policy; and the force of the appeal is not in the gain each may expect, but in the service each should give. Exactly so in times of peace the education of adult citizens should not be left to tradition nor to chance. It should depend upon an appeal for personal service.

It follows that the ordinary work of peace-time

<sup>1</sup> J. M. Gaus: *Great Britain: a study of civic loyalty*, Chicago, 1929.

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should have all the honour that, in our more primitive society, is given to service in war. The enthusiasm of a community in the democratic tradition would involve a much more revolutionary change of attitude than that advocated by any dictatorship; for the service to be called for in a democracy would be not preparations for conflict, but the progress of civilized life in all countries among all peoples. And the source of that enthusiasm would be, not obedience to a "leader," but the spontaneous desire to make a new sort of life arising among the great majority of nobodies. Education is the process by which that kind of enthusiasm and that spontaneity can be given power to develop; and education, in this sense, is not instruction for the ignorant by the inspired few, but only a removal of the obstructive customs and prejudices which now prevent ordinary folk from bringing into play what is best in them.

The assumptions of the democratic tradition may be questioned, but they have never been shown to be invalid. The fundamental assumption is that ordinary men folk want to do what they ought to do. They want to help and not to hinder other people. They want to make life better, not for themselves alone. Obviously they are not angels of light; but neither are they devils incarnate. And if they have an opportunity, they will live together amicably with much less hesitation or difficulty than in the past. The schools and all the other parts of the educational system ought to create such an opportunity and to assist in producing

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a community conscious of its own life in common. All real education is a luxury in so far as it gives more than the ability to play one's part in the present world, because it gives each person power to assist his fellows in making a better world.

## CHAPTER IX

### CIVILIZATION AND BARBARISM

IF education is to produce the kind of community described above, what is to produce the kind of education which will do it? The traditional advocates of democracy always replied to arguments showing popular incompetence by saying that education would make everything right; but they never explained how education itself was to be made to do the job. And, as we have seen, it is not a question of some education against no education: it is a question of the kind of education. Clearly, unless the present adult generation is "converted," it cannot convert the next. The teachers in schools and universities cannot create a new standard of character and conduct unless there is somewhere in the world they inhabit an appreciation and understanding of such a standard: for schools are not in a separate universe. The atmosphere of the everyday world penetrates by all the windows and doors into the schoolrooms and the text-books. How, then, is the atmosphere to be changed which now enters, perhaps unnoticed, into our educational system? The change of atmosphere depends largely upon those no longer at school. How far can those of us who are no longer at school help in the making of a new way of life in common?

The change of atmosphere in the whole of a

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community can be caused by its system of government. Public policy therefore is concerned with modification or transformation of the social standards inherited from the past. Each generation is able to influence the schools and the educational system which carries on its tradition by its manner of dealing with public affairs and through the effect of public policy upon its own character. As Montesquieu noted, an absolute monarchy induces certain characteristics in its subjects and requires those characteristics to be dominant in order that it may survive; and similarly a "democracy," in his conception of it, induces and requires a certain "virtue." For many generations the ideal type of man and woman aimed at by any system and required for its maintenance may not be consciously present to the mind. The traditional social standards usually influence public policy unconsciously. But at certain times, and ours is such a time, the question arises whether the traditional standard is the best. It is generally agreed that some changes must be made; or at least that the changes in manners and customs caused by modern invention should be controlled and directed by reference to some more definite conception of the community we desire to live in.

If, however, all public policy is fundamentally a method of maintaining an old social standard or establishing a new one, then all government is a kind of education. A State is a kind of school. Administration is training in the art of living with others in a community; and legislation is the making of the school

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rules. The purpose of government is at any rate vaguely conceived to be the formation of particular kinds of men and women. It is generally supposed that government makes civilized life possible; and that means making the other fellow better at living in peace with each of us, even if "we" are already perfect!

### *Obsolete Methods of Government*

But government, like school education, is old, and it bears the marks of its ancestry. The methods of government have changed, as the methods of education have, but less radically in most parts of the world. In discussing education in the preceding chapter, the old method of education by blows and terror was not mentioned. It still exists in the more primitive schools of the upper classes. But it is hardly worth arguing nowadays that a rod is not a very good instrument for teaching. No sentimental feeling for children need be appealed to. The chief argument against flogging as a method of education is that it does not "deliver the goods." Rubbing red pepper into a witness's eyes has been found to produce bad evidence; and therefore that method is no longer used for obtaining truth from witnesses. Similarly, knowledge is not promoted by the flogging method; nor is anything else, except low cunning and a sort of brutal insensitiveness.

The flogging method, however, is not yet abolished in that form of education which is called government. Indeed, that method, which is as ancient as the hills,

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is advocated as the "latest thing" in government by the advocates of dictatorship against democracy. In Russia, in Italy, and in Germany those in control of government use violence to punish the bad pupils—of course, for their own good! In Germany the Nazi biologists actually assert that their concentration camps are intended for the "education" of their components, thus indicating how little they know about education. Imprisonment of those who disagree with the Government and torturing or petty nagging at them are used by the post-war dictatorships to keep their "schools" in order, both by terrifying pupils who are unwilling and inducing others to attend to what is taught.

This system of government is like the obsolete form of education also in its authoritarianism. In discussing schools above it was assumed that the schoolmaster is no longer expected to be regarded as an infallible absolute authority above criticism and in possession of final truth. It was assumed that in modern education the pupil is taught to think for himself, not merely to swallow what his teacher tells him. But government dictatorships rests upon the ancient method of education. Those in control of government there profess to be above criticism and to know the truth; and this is supposed to be a new idea! The very accents of mediaeval orthodoxy come over the radio from Moscow, Berlin, and Rome. It may be, as we are assured by their schoolmasters, that the pupils in those schools would go wrong if they were allowed



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to think for themselves or to criticize their teachers. It is very likely that the citizens of democracies do make mistakes. But in modern education that is not admitted as an argument in favour of mediaeval authoritarianism. Indeed, the very possibility of going wrong is the means by which modern education or modern government induces us to find out what is right. That is the first principle upon which the advance of civilized life has always depended.

What is at stake, therefore, in the controversy between dictatorship and other forms of government is not merely parliament or free speech, but—civilization. The world is now faced with a clear issue—civilization or barbarism. Dictatorship is simply the governmental form of barbarism. But let it be clearly understood—hostility to dictatorship is not due merely to pity for its victims, nor merely to a desire to be left alone; it is due to the conviction that the method of government practised by dictators is as obsolete as flogging and the infallibility of teachers in schools. In principle, and not merely because of some unfortunate cruelties of its supporters, dictatorship is altogether wrong. Government based upon compulsion of opponents and denial of the right of criticism is simply an obsolete form of education.

The ultimate criterion for choice between different systems of government is the kind of men and women each system produces, just as the test of the value of a school is the effect it has on its pupils, not the self-satisfaction of those in control of it. It will be shown,

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therefore, here that the kind of men and women most suitable for what is best in the modern world cannot be produced under dictatorship. Clearly, a system of education can produce the sort of community in which that system is most suitable. Barbarism at school is a good training for barbarism outside; and barbarism outside creates the situation favourable to barbarism in schools. Similarly, if dictatorships produce war, they may prove that dictatorship, which trains for war, is the most practical kind of government. But if, on the other hand, we desire a world or a community of neighbours in which health and knowledge and friendly feeling and common service of civilized life are more usual than they now are, then dictatorship is not only useless but pernicious. Whatever may be the way in which we can help the educational system to transform the community, whatever the form of government which will change the social atmosphere for the better, it is not dictatorship; for that is a mere revival of a method and a system already proved useless.

## *The Products and the Process of Civilization*

This may sound paradoxical, because dictatorships claim to have improved health, schools, roads, railways, and other aspects of modern civilization among their peoples. Certainly the people of Russia and Italy are in some ways better now than they were before their dictators took charge. There is less disease;

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illiteracy is reduced; production in industry and perhaps in some forms of agriculture is more efficient; railways are improving, and so is road transport. The United States of America is being closely followed in its mechanical development by the policy of the Soviet Government. And in Italy trains, at least on the main lines, are more punctual than they were. It is too soon to say how far the Nazi régime in Germany has improved industrial prospects there, or the supply of food and clothing. Germany, like Austria, under municipal socialism, had already made great advances in her chief cities; and the improvement in public services may be continued under a dictatorship. But it may be noted that health, education, and public services generally have advanced very greatly also in Great Britain and the United States, not under dictatorships. In the democratic tradition such advance is taken for granted, and therefore is not so much trumpeted abroad. Dictatorships are like religious converts who claim credit for doing after conversion what other people were doing all the time as part of the day's work. It should be noted also that the systems of public health and school organization, of manufacture and transport, for the introduction of which the dictatorships claim credit, are systems discovered and practised in the democracies. Thus the advocates of dictatorship use the products of the system they condemn! They seem to believe that civilization and culture consist in the latest results of a process, not in the process itself. But savages can

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wear silk hats, if they believe these to be what is admirable in civilization. The barbarians who took over control among the ruins of the Roman Empire learned to dress themselves in "some rags of the Roman purple" in their kingships and their law and eventually their scholastic learning. The products of any civilization can be exported outside its borders and may even survive its destruction—as the Roman roads survived the disappearance of Roman government. But the strangest of all survivals, surely, is the "Roman salute" of Fascists and Nazis, now practised when the consul and the praetor are ghosts. Playing soldiers in graveyards, postures in the manner of the mighty dead, will these evoke the spirit of Caesar? The manners and customs of dictatorship are sympathetic magic; and their adoption of new ideas in industry or education is a sign of the admiration among barbarians for what they do not understand. Clearly, the dictatorships have made some improvements in adopting the results of modern government; but they have shown no understanding of its methods. The real difficulty about terrorism and authoritarianism as methods of government is that, although they may allow the use of the products of civilization, they obstruct and destroy the very process which made those products possible. How, indeed, was it discovered that public health organization prevented cholera and typhus? It was not a revelation to Edwin Chadwick; and Karl Marx, living at the same date, knew nothing about it. It was the result of thousands

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of experiments and new ideas and criticism of traditional ideas which were maintained by authority. What we call "science" is, in fact, nothing but the free discussion of opposing views and the criticism of authority. We have found that these lead to truth, but not at any stage to "final" truth; and therefore we value the process more highly than the product at any date. The extension of the art of government to the prevention of cholera in city-areas was an instance of scientific method applied to social problem. The result is less important than the process. In medicine it is found best not to accept what Gale or even Lister taught, without criticism. In engineering we do not suppose that Henry Ford is infallible. But the process by which we reached our present conclusions in medicine and engineering should be continued in hope of still better results. So also in government the application of existing knowledge is of less importance than the promotion of that criticism of government and discussion of opposing views which will rid us of present evils, as the same method rid our ancestors of cholera in cities. It is essential to the art of government that free criticism of all authority should be maintained and open discussion of opposing views. That method alone has been proved to give good results.

Similarly, in educational policy schools for the whole population were discovered to be good, in defiance of the traditional ideas that schools were for a select class; and in the methods of education

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physical training, dance, song, and occupational tasks were found to be good only by criticism of authority and discussion of opposing views. Modern educational systems and methods are the results up to date of a process which is itself more valuable than its results. But to establish a school system and then forbid criticism of it or of the teaching given in it is to misunderstand the very nature of education. It is to mistake the momentary form of the wave for the force which makes the wave. Such mistakes are excusable in those who have never understood what distinguishes civilization from barbarism; but they can hardly be made the basis of a system of government for the modern world. No desirable life in common can be created, however good the drains, however new the tricks in school-teaching, if the fundamental forces which went to the making of drains and new methods of teaching are obstructed. The democratic tradition takes most pride, not in its drains or roads or school methods, but in the men and women who made these possible by denying in practice all that the dictatorships now advocate.

If the actual reforms valued so highly in dictatorships are looked at more closely, another aspect of civilization appears in contrast with barbarism. Drains and water-supply and punctual trains are indeed parts of civilized life; but only because of their effects in the formation of certain kinds of men and women. That is to say, drains are for health; and health is an attribute of living persons. Thus government as a

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means of improving the drains is really government as a method of increasing vitality in actual men, women, and children. Similarly, schools are for persons, to give them knowledge and skill. All the social functions of modern government, however, promote not only health but the ability to get more of it, not only knowledge and skill but the desire to get more of them. The most valuable effect of the process described above is, therefore, the appreciation of that process by men and women who learn, by experience of its good effects, to use the process for themselves. Clearly, health services do not make ordinary folk into specialists in diet or drugs; and schools do not make all men into research students. But health services properly organized ought to make ordinary folk more competent in applying modern methods to problems of their own health; and schools ought to make ordinary folk less gullible. Authoritarian systems prevent these best effects of the new functions of government in modern times. They prevent those who may derive benefit from better conditions even understanding how those benefits have been secured. They therefore create a type of man and woman which is unfitted to face any new issue for themselves, a community which is lifeless in all that makes civilized man distinct from his primitive ancestors. The life in common becomes the life of a flock of puzzled sheep, guided perhaps by a benevolent superior with the aid of a sheepdog; but that is not the community of the future for which we hope.



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There is no way forward through any form of dictatorship, because all dictatorship prevents the beneficiaries of the system from learning how to acquire benefits for themselves.

## *Improvements in the Process*

It is not enough for public policy, however, to see that one particular road to social improvement is a blind alley. It is not enough to condemn dictatorship. Nothing, in fact, can excuse complacency among those of the democratic tradition so long as privation and ignorance still survive the workings of a much-praised parliamentary system, a "free" Press, and discussion between opponents. After all, the process may be admirable; but "the proof of the pudding is in the eating." The real problem is not merely "Could we do better under dictatorship?" but "How can we do better than we are doing?" To show that dictatorship obstructs more than it promotes is only half the battle. The problem remains: What method will promote the destruction of existing evils? What method will bring into use the available resources of civilized life?

The answer suggested in the whole of this book is that the same process which was used to prevent cholera will prevent the evils of unemployment; that is to say, the fundamental process—criticism of authority and discussion of opposing views—leading to a new policy. Advocates of representative govern-



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ment and responsible, removable governors sometimes forget the main argument in favour of their view. Voting is of minor importance; not the vote, but the discussion before the voting takes place is the essential characteristic of democracy. The free criticism of those in authority and the discussion of opposing views—these are the essentials of our tradition; because what we call democracy is simply the application of the same process, which we call “scientific” in medicine or engineering, to the art of government. It implies that the right policy is most easily discovered by free discussion of many different views and free criticism of what has been done. Clearly, the discussion may be unskilful. As we shall argue in the next chapter, the discussion may be actually vitiated by false information and irrelevant passions. But that some discussion is bad is no excuse for avoiding all discussion; that some criticism is reckless and unjust is no excuse for suppressing all criticism. The defects of our present system of government in “democratic” countries are not due to the principles on which it is founded, but to the fact that those principles are not understood nor applied in practice. Freedom to criticize and to discuss makes criticism and discussion more skilful; and therefore more useful to whatever group happens to be in control of public policy at any time. The formation of policy is the essential characteristic of democracy, not the kind of policy eventually adopted. But obviously a policy formed by discussion and criticism will be different from one

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adopted by infallible "leaders" who are immune from criticism. A democratic policy will be more flexible, more empirical, more diverse in its sources and less rigid in its application than a dictator's policy; but that is precisely the sort of distinction which divides science from dogmatism.

### *The Social Responsibility of the Scientist and the Artist*

It is said, however, that science and the arts in any community are the outcome of the type of life or the economic structure of that community; and it is argued by the advocates of dictatorship that science and the arts should subserve a social purpose. The larger question whether there is a "pure" science having no connection with utility, or an "absolute" art, need not be discussed here. The problem here concerns public policy; and therefore, apart from the question of science and art in general, it may be worth while to note in what sense the needs of any community should dominate or direct the scientist or artist. Some believe in a mysterious "Aryan" race or in "Nordic" men, who have a "purity" of perception and nobility of action not to be found among Jews or negroes. For them art and science are to be judged in reference to this mysterious magical quality of the superior race to which they belong; and the Nazi dictatorship in Germany has proceeded to demand, if not yet to supply, art and science to order. On the other hand, under the Russian dictatorship the magical quality is

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believed to reside, not in a race, but in an economic or social class, the proletariat or "the toiling masses"; and under that dictatorship music is commanded to be proletarian, even if mathematics appears still to be regarded as too difficult to be directed in its true path by the toiling masses.

The scientist and the artist are clearly members of some community, not only as human beings but also in their special position as persons of exceptional ability. They have no moral right to repudiate responsibility for the use of their ability. Each person of exceptional ability owes more than an ordinary person to the community of which he forms a part. But *what* he owes cannot be decided by any particular group or clique in control of government at any moment. The actual structure of society at any moment is not the final criterion by reference to which science and the arts are to be estimated. If it were, then education would have to resist all change. The control of science and the arts by a dictatorship either implies that the particular situation under that dictatorship is perfect, which is absurd, or it implies that science and the arts are mere instruments of propaganda, which is a complete misunderstanding of all science and art.

The responsibility of the artist to the community arises out of the membership of all men in a community other than that of any particular moment. That is what used to be called "the City of God." The sight of that city inspires the artist to arouse others to the vision on the horizon of ordinary life.

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The artist should make men share that divine discontent which changes any actual community into one that is better. And similarly, the responsibility of the scientist arises out of the *search* for truth, not the possession of truth. His chief function is to discover what is not known—even to a dictator! He should disturb orthodoxy, not disguise it in learned phrases and formulas. Above all, in the social sciences “the truth” is not known; and it would destroy all possibility of living knowledge if those in power in any particular community could define beforehand what the method or conclusions of economic or any other social theory must be. The attempt to control art and science in the interests of any system of government is due to a lack of education among those who make such an attempt. In all countries we suffer from the illiteracy of those in control of public policy.

## *Dogma and Reasoning*

There are, however, in every community many admirable persons who prefer dogma to science. Few understand what scientific method is. Both on “the Left” and on “the Right,” in the discussion of public policy, there are mediaeval dogmatism and a love of such dogmatism. It gives what simple minds call “certainty.” It makes possible the maintenance of a political creed without the trouble of searching for evidence in its favour; and indeed, the weaker the evidence for any belief, the more violent that belief

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can become. Those who quite plainly do not understand the value of free investigation and the use of hypothesis rather than final conclusions will naturally advocate some form of dictatorship. They are so certain that they are right that discussion seems to them to be a waste of time; and such persons, if they dominate the policy of any community, can produce by education only similar persons in the future. They will re-create the mediaeval world in order to find a place for the particular form of mediaeval dogmatism which they prefer. They will make men and women, through the schools and outside, who are quite unfitted to face the modern world.

But there are others, in the communities of the democratic tradition, upon whom the long struggles of Protestantism, of humanitarianism, of liberalism, have had enduring effects. These others cannot, if they so desired, go back to dogmatism and the persecution of opponents. They cannot, unless they are driven mad, prevent even the opponents of liberty from advocating the suppression of liberty. They will not oppose dogmatism and persecution with anything of the same kind. But the inability to persecute dogmatists and advocates of dictatorship is a weakness, unless it is merely the outward form of a more vigorous and enduring faith than that of barbarians. The barbarians and the mediaeval dogmatists are sure of themselves. Are the advocates of democracy equally determined about what they will work for and equally confident about their own ability to attain it? Can a community

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such as that indicated in the foregoing chapters of this book be created within the democratic tradition by discussion and criticism? The answer must be given by those who hesitate to persecute, not because they are weak, but because they are quite confident of their own strength. Resolute action can be based upon scientific hypothesis just as well as upon an infallible creed; for we run our motors with confidence, even if we do not claim to have reached the final truth about combustion.

It has become the fashion to speak of the decay of democracy or the downfall of the system established in democratic countries during the nineteenth century. But nothing could be more ridiculous than such judgment. Is a war lost if the enemy calls up his last reserves? Is it lost even if some ground which had been thought secure from invasion is swept over by a marauding band? Indeed, the dictatorships have not yet begun to feel the real force of civilization, which may arise again among their followers—the power of reasoning. And we who know what reasoning has done during the past few centuries should have faith enough in its power to subdue emotional storms. The more noise a machine makes, the less its power. The finer types of power are silent; and so the democratic tradition may require no big drums and yet have force. But reasoning and critical thinking have never yet been cold and calculating. Tyrannies have been destroyed and slaves freed by the only true reasoning, which is passionate. The whole person acts,

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not an abstraction called reason. Those therefore who have experience of civilized government should put some emotional force into their own efforts to create a new community. They should have power to discuss, to criticize, and to reach or accept decisions; and emotion is certainly not obstructive of such power. Only the lower and more unstable emotions destroy tolerance and enforce uncriticized commands. The finer emotion, which is inseparable from the perception of facts and the understanding of what is best in men, is essential to the progress of civilized life. And therefore public policy must mobilize such finer emotion in support of the programme for the abolition of poverty and of war. It should call upon all citizens, not merely to pay taxes or to vote, but to work for a common good in making themselves capable of destroying evils and creating a new manner of life. Each person's chief public duty is to work at his own common sense, his sensitiveness to the needs of others, and his ability to use more fully his own vitality.

## *The Advance of Civilized Life*

It is futile to propose improvements in institutions because they do not fit into some abstract general principle. It is not of supreme importance that some votes do not count, or that men are unequal in intelligence. The main issue is how to get rid of privation and war; or rather, how to release the excellent abilities in common folk that are repressed



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and destroyed by these ancient evils. The test of a system of government is whether it destroys evils and promotes good; and it is difficult to believe that a mere reorganization of the representative system will be of much use. What sort of government will prevent privation and unemployment? What sort of government will prevent war? The answer to those questions may not be in terms of the traditional democracy; but the definition of democracy does not matter. The institutions required for the abolition of poverty and war entirely depend upon a general appreciation of the purpose to be achieved.

The purpose is a new way of living together with our fellow men—new in containing more common good and less evil. Not Utopia, but the next stage in the history of civilized life is our immediate concern. And that next stage, even if it is not likely to satisfy all of us, should be sufficiently clear and sufficiently attractive for the great majority of normal men and women to work for it as part of their most enjoyable activities. The "duties of citizenship" are usually conceived to be rather a bore! The preachers in our tradition have believed that what a person ought to do cannot be enjoyable. But we have discovered the falsehood of that theory in our educational methods; and now, in that part of education which is government, we should be able to understand that a normal man or woman enjoys helping others in a common task. The job itself also is not oppressive. To make a community whose members can live together may



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in fact be amusing. Most nations have hitherto regarded as the highest devotion the most primitive effort at killing other people in war and the willingness to die together; but now at last a sufficient number of able and intelligent men and women know and feel that there are nobler expressions of service and devotion to the common good.

All kinds of simple things still remain to be done—to make better settings for roads and better playgrounds in schools, to organize new groups of travel or adventure, to improve bodily skill or skill in the arts. And all these are experiments in new ways of living which can be undertaken spontaneously by ordinary folk. In the democratic tradition it is not necessary to wait for instructions from the Government or “the leader” before playing a new game or even establishing a new industry; and the sense of community in normal men and women is sufficiently strong to react to any skilful expression of the idea that there is a job to be done for the common good. In the art of government, civilization is distinguished from barbarism by the proportion of natural and spontaneous fellowship as compared with imposed order; for civilized life is not external control of subjects by superiors, but the spontaneous and intelligent co-operation of equals in a common life. That system of government is best which promotes most effectually such spontaneous co-operation of all citizens; and that system alone can produce a social atmosphere within which the education of equals in

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a free society is possible. The success of the new education for life in common, described in the last chapter, therefore depends upon the creation of a community of men and women who know how to use freedom, not in order to protect themselves each from the others, but in order that each may help all.

Public policy therefore should be not merely the result of the "will" of the people or the vote of the majority. It should be the formative influence in giving the people a "will" or making the majority understand the limited value of their vote and the need for more than occasional discussions of public affairs; for government is not an occasional decision interrupting private life—it is a system of continuous co-operation between all citizens. The best system of government is one which makes the largest number of citizens understand what government is. That dictatorship can never do; for the only way of discovering the true nature of government is to take some part in governing. The dictator may tell his faithful followers how hard his task and how noble he is to undertake it for their sake; but they cannot understand what he is talking about if they can only cheer. But the alternative is not the traditional "democracy." The alternative is a much greater participation in the art of government than is involved in an occasional vote at an election or an unwilling payment of taxes. The defect of what we call "democratic government" is that it is not democratic enough;

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and it is not democratic enough not because of any defect in the voting system, but because voting is not the chief duty of citizens. That duty is not to express their "will," but to make a "will" that is worth expression.

## CHAPTER X

### LEADERS AND NOBODIES

THE questions answered in this book follow one another in the manner of the old rhyme, "Who killed Cock Robin?" One question leads to another; but now the last is reached. The questions, Whose good is the common good? and, Of what does that good consist? have led to the question in the last chapter, What sort of men and women are likely to make and enjoy the common good which has been discussed? But the final question is the most pointed. This must now be answered: Which of us, who are now living, can begin the work? And the answer is: The Nobodies, John Smith and Mary Brown, who are unknown to the newspapers, who wear no political shirts, who are indeed indistinguishable to any eye which sees only "the mass" and "an élite." If John Smith and Mary Brown could hear the argument which has been followed so far, it would not matter that superior persons did not approve. Common folk would understand.

But surely John Smith and Mary Brown cannot be expected to organize public health and research in education, to govern colonies, and to decide about the gold standard? No; they rightly transfer to specialists not only the diagnosis and the prescription for social ills, but also power to command. The

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democratic tradition, like dictatorship, requires the establishment of authority. The first act of common folk, therefore, in making the new community is to *find leaders*. Specialists advise; but those chosen to carry out the treatment cannot merely advise. They must command. And John Smith and Mary Brown must obey; but only after they have chosen whom to obey. This is the chief problem of leadership—not how to lead, but how to choose a leader.

The new dictatorship has adopted from the democratic tradition the theory of the chosen leader; but it has taken the most dangerous element in that tradition by itself and thrown away the other part which acted as an antidote to the danger. In dictatorship, when the choice has been made, the leader is above criticism and is irremovable. Only so, the followers say, is the command imperative and the obedience certain. And thus, as in other issues, dictatorship takes the product without understanding the process. It sanctifies the vote and repudiates what alone makes the vote valuable—the fact that it can be changed after further discussion. Leadership in the democratic tradition is fundamentally different from the absolutism of the “leader principle” in a dictatorship; although authority to command is essential to both.

### *Democratic Leadership*

But the very conception of leadership may be dangerous. Some advocates of democratic leadership

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are really searching for an excuse to establish exactly that kind of absolutism which is peculiar to dictatorship. All phrases such as "Above Party" or "l'Union Sacrée" or "the Doctor's Mandate" are danger signals. They are emotional disguises for a repudiation of democratic principles. Again, the "leaders" chosen for common folk by the newspapers and other advertising media are not the genuine article. Such leaders have only a superficial attractiveness. A good platform manner is like a good bedside manner, which is useful to a good doctor, but may be the disguise for a bad one. Therefore, as a preliminary to any discussion of leaders, a little of what the Americans call "debunking" is very useful. Deflation, however dangerous in the financial sense, is essential for reducing claims to leadership wherever they have been inflated by the cocksureness of half-educated enthusiasts. Leadership, therefore, cannot be safely accepted without a clear view of the distinctions between different kinds of leader; for there are many different ways in which a person may come to be taken as a leader; and some of the ways are muddy.

In a community unfamiliar with the arts of the advertiser any soap is taken as "the best" whose salesmen can spend enough upon saying so. But in spite of advertisement it is possible to choose between soaps. Politically, the organs of notoriety are not less dangerous when under dictatorship they all play the same tune; but when the advertisers are many, common folk are less easily misled than superior

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persons imagine. At any rate, if they make a mistaken choice, they can learn from the result.

First, then, it must be noted that there are many different kinds of leaders and leadership. Instruments and agents of government, who may be called "leaders," if that is the new jargon, include elected representatives, Ministers in positions of authority, and officials of the community. The ordinary citizen plays his part in choosing some of them and also in deciding what method of selection of the others shall be adopted. Having been chosen or selected, the "leader" or person in authority, in the democratic tradition, must be able to stand up to criticism. Any leader who requires to be immune from criticism before he can lead is a bad leader. Indeed, the conception of blind obedience to infallible orders is nowadays merely a pathological result of experience in the Great War. In the primitive and brutal conditions of warfare some did indeed enjoy giving orders, and others enjoyed obeying orders without feeling any responsibility. But the normal functions of a modern State cannot be performed on that sort of basis. Criticism of representatives, officials, and "experts" is essential in order to make them explain themselves; and also in order to give them the knowledge they should require about those whom they command. It is also the chief security against corruption and graft. That is to say, criticism improves leadership.

Again, representatives, officials, and experts must



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be removable. If they are not, even the most competent inevitably develops a "caste" mentality; even the best official tends to think that "the country" is safe so long as he is safe in his job. But to change one's representatives or to remove one's experts and officials does not involve an eternal "swing of the pendulum" at elections, nor the American spoils system for officials. Few officials may need actually to be removed; but that they are removable is an important principle. It may be better to have responsible Ministers holding office for longer periods than has been customary in some countries; but it is important that they *can* be dismissed at any moment. To speak plainly, John Smith and Mary Brown must not transfer their powers of criticism and removal of agents at any moment to any Ministers, representatives or officials. Thus the only type of "leader" which should be possible in the democratic tradition is one open to criticism and removable at the will of his followers. The reason is that only so can we create a community of men and women such as we desire, alive at all points, using their best intelligence in the furtherance of the common good.

The test of greatness in public affairs—that is to say, in the power to exert influence over man—is not easier to apply than is the test of greatness in music or science. A certain knowledge of the common life is essential for applying the test. But ordinary folk have precisely that kind of knowledge of common life which is required for testing greatness in leaders.



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Clearly, they may be mistaken. They may be hoodwinked by fine phrases or confused by rhetoric that has no meaning at all. But there is no evidence that they are generally mistaken; and there could not be evidence that they must always be so, for no one knows the undeveloped abilities of men. If greater social abilities were developed, mistakes in the choice or selection of any persons for any public offices would be less likely; but these social abilities are not mainly intellectual. They are chiefly expressed in a sense that such and such a person has a capable personality.

## *Public Authority in a Democracy*

The representative or public official, Minister or administrator has the authority belonging to his status; and there is in democracy, as in other forms of government, one position which has supreme authority within the sphere of government. The power to command in that sphere must be complete. Who has that power at any moment is a different question; but there is no doubt at all that whoever has it must disregard for the time discussion of the source of his power. The captain of the ship, when he is on the bridge, cannot allow disputes as to his power to command. The leader, while he is leader, is there to direct, not to apologize for his opinion. Clearly, in directing men emotional influence or the force of personality is more valuable than the mere shouting

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of orders; for a leader in a democracy is more like a great teacher than a drill sergeant. But there must be no sort of doubt of the authority of the person in command when decisions have to be made; and this authority, if it is disputed by force or threat, must be maintained by physical force, by armed force if necessary.

Armed force, therefore, is essential in any State, although the need for it will be less in proportion as the community is more civilized. The authority of the law and of the Executive should never depend upon armed force, if dependence means that this authority would disappear without armed force; because the "authority" of law and administration is essentially a moral authority, a power to exert influence over men by the use of their own consciences. But moral authority may be supported by force; and in any case, having "authority"—in the sense of actual power to make men act—includes both moral influence and physical force. Less force is required the more moral influence is possessed by the law and the executive; but there are times when force must be used, and perhaps there are persons who must be dealt with forcibly.

The democratic tradition has been concerned chiefly with the *source* of power, not with the nature of power; and the theories of the "sovereign people" have confused the current ideas about the established Government. Similarly, the theory of the divine right of kings strengthened the king's authority in practice,

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until theologians began to dispute how God had conferred the right and under what conditions. The divine right of "the people," accepted as blindly as that of kings in the late eighteenth and in the nineteenth century, began to be doubted when social theorists discussed the actual practice of choosing at elections. But the authority of "the Government" in either case should have rested, not upon the method of choosing who should be "the Government," but upon an appreciation of the function of "the Government." Dictatorships have attempted to express the authority of "the Government" by waiving or confusing the problem as to the *source* of that authority. Can the democratic tradition retain the conception of popular choice without weakening the authority of those chosen? In practice in Italy, Germany, and Russia, dictators have arisen only when "the Government" has been uncertain of its own power to command and unwilling or unable to use force for supporting its command; but the Governments which were destroyed had lost moral authority long before their force was challenged.

For that reason it is necessary to be quite definite: "the Government," under the democratic tradition, must have undisputed and supreme power, within agreed legal limits, over all citizens and subjects. Common folk know this better than some writers on liberty and free speech. John Smith and Mary Brown do not feel degraded by the exercise of authority over them; for when they ask a person to cook for them

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they expect the cooking to be done without continual discussion. Clearly, there is a danger of tyranny. No form of social organization can provide security against all dangers. But even the Russian revolutionaries, who began in 1917 and 1918 with committees and discussions for running industry, were compelled by the facts of the case to establish absolute authority and obedience to authority as the rule. Thus no form of social organization can dispense with complete and absolute authority in its Government.

### *The Basis of Public Authority*

The authority which flows in a democracy from "the people" into the Government has not, however, its final or fundamental source in the "will of the people," as the authority of the king under the "divine right" had not its source in the king. The authority comes finally from "the nature of things," the good which is in certain relationships between persons. Human beings are so constituted that certain relationships between them are good and certain others bad. In each man, therefore, is the force or influence which is the basis of authority.

How, then, can a democratically chosen and removable Government have enough authority to control the situation in any crisis? The reason for the weakness of Governments in certain countries now under dictatorship was clearly that ordinary folk had not grasped their *own* authority to command, as con-

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stituents of a community. The Government for thousands of years has been set over against "the people" or "the governed." The Government, even in a democracy, tends to be regarded as "they"—a mysterious entity like a Providence, from whom all good may flow and by whom irremediable evil is sometimes done. The Government is very seldom conceived as "ourselves," except by a small caste of officials and professional politicians; and even electors tend to regard their servants, the elected representatives, as somehow superior to themselves. But in order to give "the people" or the nobodies a sense of their own authority exercised through the commands of a Government, it is not enough to say that the people are sovereign and that the will of the people should prevail, especially if that will is obviously only the decision of a bare majority. Indeed, the democratic system of elections seems to have made "the Government" in certain countries appear to be only the instrument of one party or group within the whole community set over against the rest. The authority of "the Government," as an instrument of the whole community, was undermined by "the Government's" accidental and transitory characteristic as the instrument of the majority at a given moment. Therefore, the "mandate" of a Government to carry out the decision of a majority, assuming majority rule, must be distinguished from the moral authority of the Government in maintaining that rule.

The moral authority in the commands of a Govern-

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ment cannot rest upon a numerical calculation. At its worst that would reduce authority again to the command of any group which happened at any moment to be strongest; at its best the numerical majority would seem to be only the largest number who could agree about anything at all. And in any case they might agree to what is wrong. Therefore moral authority, competent even to use force, must depend upon the end or purpose for which government exists. That purpose is the same for all the members of a community; and it gives authority to the Government only because the Government in its own sphere is exercising the authority which each member of the community has in himself to pursue that purpose. The common purpose is the attainment of that good which is in a human relationship between human beings; that good is in the nature of each man related to his fellows. It is not made by men. It is discovered by them to be their nature to find that good. The final purpose of each member of the community, therefore, as well as of the Government which is the common instrument of all members, is the kind of community in which men are treated as men.

But the first and most obvious element in that purpose is *peace*, which means the abolition of force as a test of right or as an instrument in the hands of a claimant to rights for the maintenance of his claim. In other words, government is law—not any particular law, nor any particular system of laws, but

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the general principle of all laws. The moral authority of any Government, therefore, arises from the embodiment in it of that good which is, in its simplest form, peace or law. That peace has power over all men in so far as within each there is an influence or tendency moving him in its direction.

Any Government, then, has two distinct functions. It has to maintain the existing law, the system of social relationships already agreed upon either subconsciously or consciously. But it has also to maintain the system for changing the law by other means than force; and this second function is more fundamental than the former. This second function may be called the maintenance of the Constitution; but it goes beyond any actual Constitution, because the Government has the duty—and so have all citizens—to maintain the peace or the legal system underlying all constitutions. The moral authority of any Government is derived ultimately from the common good of which peace is one aspect; and therefore the distinction between government itself and the particular acts of any one Government should always be borne in mind. Indeed the strongest argument against revolution as a method of change is not that it displaces "the Government," but that it undermines government itself. Similarly "the Government" in any particular case has the supreme duty of maintaining, not its own prestige, but the moral authority of all government; and this is sacrificed if confidence in the impartiality of the legal system itself is lost.



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This ancient and well-established conception of the State means that the State itself is not supreme—that its authority arises from something in the nature of common folk; and that if there is any “divine right” in the State, it arises from the good which is common to all such folk. Any particular State ought to be destroyed if it is evil, just as any particular Government may be opposed if it is wrong; but government itself arises out of the nature of man, and the State, similarly, in the pursuit of good. Government itself cannot be destroyed or injured without injury to men themselves.

## *The Function of Nobodies*

So far the question has been: What sort of leaders are required and what authority should they have? Common folk have been assumed to be interested in both these questions. Clearly, in every community we all need the exceptional persons who have ability to lead, command, advise or criticize as specialists. But who are “we” common folk who are supposed to do the choosing and must in any case do the obeying? The new community cannot be made by those who have no real capacity to choose leaders and no real appreciation of the difference between intelligent obedience and slavish subservience. The members of the community we live in must be looked at more closely; for, although the John Smith and Mary Brown who should choose are indeed nobodies, they are not

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all the population. Tradition has confused the issue by speaking of "the people" or "the mass," as if each man was only a unit in a homogeneous heap of stones. But for the purpose of deciding upon public policy a distinction must be made among "the mass" or "the people." The common folk upon whom the future depends are only some among the whole number of the members of any community.

The members of any community may be classified in many different ways. Some have red hair and some not. Some are tall and some less so; some fat and some thin. But students of men in society usually divide the community into rich and poor, or into those of different occupations. Sometimes the distinction between social classes—lower, middle, and upper—is treated as the most important. But for the purpose of the argument here the most important distinction is between *those who have a sense of the community and those who have not*.

This distinction cuts across the others; for some rich men have a sense of the community, and some poor men have not. So also in social classes some manual workers have a very strong sense of the community, and some high officials have not. But, first, the meaning of the phrase must be made clearer. The sense of the community is an emotional and intelligent appreciation of one's dependence upon other people and of other people's need for one's own work. There are different aspects of community. When the buyer of cheese talks to his grocer there is a

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"face-to-face" community between them; and most people have a good sense of the face-to-face community they live in, even if it consists only of relatives and friends. In city-areas the face-to-face community may include the persons with whom one travels every day; but there is no intimacy in such a community. Outside the face-to-face circle one has a sort of community with the maker of one's clothes or the maker of one's bread, even if one never sees either of these persons. And in the dim distance, out of range for most people's feelings, are all the others who help in maintaining any particular form of civilized life—the community we call "the nation" or one's country. Even beyond that, and far out of sight for the majority of any nation, are the men and women of other nations, whose work assists the supply of our food and clothing.

But there is a danger in the traditional words for the larger community. The "nation" may be nothing but a myth in any man's mind. At that stage the "nation" becomes a person—Britannia, La France, and the rest. And the actual human beings who live as neighbours are entirely forgotten. Thus many who speak of the "nation" do not mean to refer at all to the fact that eighty out of every hundred in any nation are manual workers. Some mean by the "nation" only a small upper class with servants; some mean themselves only. The real sense of the community, therefore, must be understood to mean always a definite feeling of interdependence with respect to quite definite men

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and women whose characters and occupations are known.

If a person will not make room for another in a crowded train, he has no sense of the community. If he cheats others, he has none. If he treats the others who pass him merely as obstacles to be shoved aside, he has none. And in positive terms the sense of the community inclines to politeness, to seeing what is good in other folk, to helping when the chance offers, and respecting the privacy of those who can be seen to desire to be alone. But in this positive attitude is implied a confidence that others are working for the same sort of life which one desires for oneself. Thus the sense of community is also a sense of a purpose common to all the members of the community. This sense, then, is both an awareness of actual facts—that is to say, of the situation which is interdependence—and also an aspiration for that which interdependence makes possible.

Men and women differ in the amount or intensity of this sense, as they differ in their ability to see colour or to hear melodies. And many clever men and women have very little sense of the community. That is why it would be impossible to test competence for voting, for example, by an examination. A person may know all about the powers of elective auditors or the frontiers of Czechoslovakia, and may nevertheless be a very bad judge of public policy—because he lacks a definite sense of the community. It is commoner in village public-houses than in fashionable clubs. It is

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stronger in the streets and the shops than in drawing-rooms. It is most obvious in the common sense of ordinary folk carrying on together the ordinary business of living. And this sense of the community distinguishes all who have it from the others who cannot really understand what is meant by public affairs or public policy. These others, even if they are ambassadors or duchesses, are childish in this matter. Public policy depends and always must depend upon those only who have the sense of community.

Among those who have it there are distinctions due to the amount or kind of their sense in them. In any community about eighty out of a hundred have it only as a sort of undertone or undercurrent in their lives. They are clearly important: because upon their deeper feeling depends the current life of the community. They are ordinary, decent folk who keep the world going and do not think much about it. On one side of them are perhaps ten out of the hundred who are actively and consciously interested in public policy. They follow public affairs not merely with intelligence, but with active support or opposition for particular policies. But on the other side of the majority are another ten per cent who, either by nature or by the effect of circumstances, are restless and disturbed. This number includes persons who are physically abnormal, either from dyspepsia or from semi-starvation. They may become agitators. They suffer from repressions due largely to ancient institutions; and the greater the pressure upon them of such

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institutions, the worse their suffering becomes. Established Governments and officials are usually as unskilful in dealing with these people as our forefathers were in treating any abnormality. But the existence of restless agitators in any community is normally a sign that its institutions are repressing some healthy impulses. In normal times the sign does not become a portent.

As circumstances change, however, in economic depression, for example, the proportion between these different groups is also changed. The 10 per cent of the "disgruntled" become 20 or 30 per cent. The active 10 per cent who usually work at progressive policy become either despairing or inert. The majority which usually "leaves well alone" become divided into excitable, unstable groups that call upon "the Government" to do something—no matter what! In any extreme change of circumstances the sense of the community as a whole, in all members, becomes unstable, erratic—violent at some moments, and at others inert. A social neurosis exists.

That was the situation in Russia in 1917, in Germany in 1923 and again in 1932, and in Italy in 1922. A less extreme neurosis occurred in Great Britain in 1931, in the United States in 1933, and in France in 1934. Social unrest, riots or violent struggles are the results of the change of proportion between those who have different amounts of the sense of the community, or perhaps different kinds of that sense; and the disturbance of the great majority, who are normally

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passive, may strain existing institutions or destroy them.

In such a situation those who have the deepest sense of the community may take one of two courses. They may seize power themselves, using their superior knowledge of social institutions or their superior capacity for influencing others. Thus the particular John Smiths and Mary Browns who have the sense of community may support a dictatorship; and it may be assumed that they do so for the advantage of the whole community. But if they take this course they misunderstand what is actually most advantageous for all men. They prove themselves ignorant of the fact that a man is a man only in so far as he "goes of himself."

On the other hand, those with the deepest sense of the community may use their ability mainly to spread more widely and to deepen that sense in all others; and thus the John Smiths and Mary Browns who "save the republic" do so by inducing a greater number to save it. This is democracy. It does not imply that all the nobodies are equally alive to public affairs; but it does imply that they all have unused capacities of thought and emotion, as well as of muscle, to be brought out by skilful appeal or by newly devised customs and institutions. The new situation, in which unrest and lack of confidence is widespread, especially among the young, cannot be understood nor controlled by the use of the traditional phrases and the old institutions.



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### *New Forms of Association for Public Policy*

This book is not about institutions, but about the spirit or psychological "set" which informs, destroys, and represses institutions or replaces them by others. Nevertheless, a word may be said about the forms in which modern tendencies would naturally be expressed; for clearly the voting system and the officialdom and the Cabinet Government of the nineteenth century are not likely to be eternal. Some such old forms may be used in new ways. The proverb holds good that the tool is not rejected by a workman who is skilful enough. Indeed, many complaints against ancient institutions are excuses for incompetence in using them. Monarchy and Presidency and Parliament and Congress may be much more pliable than most of us imagine; for at least in our tradition we are accustomed to making the "Conventions" of government overcome the limits of the traditional "Constitution." But some new institutional forms are certainly coming into existence which are deeply affecting, for example, the party system.

Voluntary associations for specific kinds of common good are performing new functions to-day. That is to say, the "active" type of mind, attaching to itself some of the passive majority, exerts pressure, for example, on public policy for education or housing or health or foreign policy. Examples in Great Britain are the W.E.A., the Westminster Housing Association, the Sunlight League, the League of Nations Union. Each

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of these cuts across the traditional party divisions and makes a new adjustment of "public opinion" towards specific purposes of public policy.

Those who are active in such societies are not pursuing their own "interests" in the sense of economic or political "interest." They are working for what they feel to be a common good. They are "specialists" in the sense of having a definite opinion on the particular point for which their society works, but not "specialists" in the sense of experts. They are more generally supporters of experts. Thus they are in fact the force which is referred to as "public opinion" on this or that point; for public opinion on any point is very seldom the opinion of the majority in a community. It may become a majority opinion, if the active few spread their influence far enough. But politicians and officials know well enough that they must look out for trouble from the voluntary associations in their particular sphere; and the real force in these associations is an active few.

The most interesting change, however, is the contrast between the voluntary association of to-day and that of the nineteenth century. In the old days the voluntary associations pressed on with public work which was eventually taken over by the public authorities. Thus the charity schools became the State schools. And in the old theory, when the State took over the job the voluntary association's work was done. Its old pioneering function was indeed no longer required. But the new voluntary association is

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not a precursor of State activity; it is a sort of explosive force in the machine, like vaporized petrol in the internal combustion engine, or—as the steam age would have said—like steam in the locomotive. We have discovered that “the State” does not go of itself. Old-fashioned socialism was too optimistic. The best of officials needs something outside the official world to make him “go.” The most public-spirited Minister needs to be reminded that other people have some knowledge of the job he is supposed to be doing. Deputations and public discussions, therefore, organized by those who are “interested” in the psychological, not the economic, sense, may improve public policy. Lobbying is not in itself objectionable, if the lobbyists are not grinding their own axes.

These organized groups of opinion on special aspects of public policy tend to include members of different political parties; and their relation to the older party system has not yet been worked out. But these non-party groups tend to correct some defects of the old party system. For example, the “policy” of any one party has tended to be an accidental mixture of unconnected items. A party accustomed to opposition tends to advocate anything and everything which is contrary to the traditional order. And a party associated with particular “interests”—for example, land-owning—tends to accept other conventional ideas associated with land-owners which have no logical connection—for example, ecclesiastical conformity. However, a party is a nineteenth-century

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product; and it may have a new form in this century. In any case, those who work for new educational methods, for example, may be quite different from those who work for the reform of colonial government. Being "advanced" simply because it is not orthodox is a pose; and probably does not imply any useful knowledge about what can be done in any specific section of public policy. Being "conservative" in everything in the same way is simply an excuse for not thinking at all. The new groups for some specific policy—in education or foreign affairs, for example—may make it possible for a man or woman to work for some public good which is not the main purpose of any political party. Policy on this or that point may thus be freed from party dogmatism.

Apart from new institutions erected by voluntary groups of supporters for a particular policy, there may be a place for something of the nature of a "religious order," uniting those who are more enthusiastic in their advocacy or their work for the common good. This is the suggestion of H. G. Wells in his *Open Conspiracy*; and it is perhaps foreshadowed in the small groups of competent persons who are "planning" for social progress to-day. The "religious order," in this sense, is not an agreement between members of a gang to co-operate in dictating to the rest. It is an association for spreading ideas and new habits without compulsion. It seems probable, therefore, that the nobodies will have to discover for themselves in small groups new ways of intercourse and co-operation as sources

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of the new influence required to invigorate public policy within the democratic tradition.

### *Unused Abilities of Common Folk*

First, then, a question of principle has been decided—authority rests upon the good embodied in government; and secondly, a question of fact has been answered—there are some nobodies in any community who have a sense of that good which is expressed in the life of their community as a fact or an aspiration, and all nobodies may develop this sense. These nobodies are the real source of public policy; but they are not themselves perfect. They have to choose leaders and select agents; and therefore they ought to improve their ability to choose and select. They are, in practice, always at work improving their own ability—for all human intercourse is an experiment in bringing out more abilities in all the parties to that intercourse. But at present the rate of improvement should be increased. The collapse of traditional certainties and conventional habits is visible around us. The habitations we have inherited are becoming unfit for shelter or comfort. Repair can only postpone the inevitable ruin caused by biological and psychological changes, which act as earthquakes beneath social institutions. And therefore the nobodies must begin reconstruction. New institutions on new bases require more knowledge and skill in the builders; but the first need is an awareness of the good material

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within ourselves which can be used to make the new world.

The part each person should play in the life of the community, and the contribution each should make to the common good, cannot be decided by anyone for anyone else. Indeed, the chief activity of a person is the discovery for himself or herself of precisely that—what he or she should do in the given circumstances. But some general assumptions may be stated which should form the basis of personal decision; for the complaint against circumstances sometimes forms a disguise for a misjudgment of one's own capacities or an excuse for not testing them. Most people suppose that they know all about themselves: but that is a mistake.

Assume, then, that in any man or woman there are unused abilities not yet called into play. On that assumption the attempt to discover what one should do will not be based upon the traditional view of one's position or the already acquired skill or knowledge which one is supposed to possess. Especially in education it should be assumed that there may be abilities in the younger generation which have never been used in former generations. We must not fix, therefore, too rigidly the lines within which the new generation should seek knowledge and skill and emotional experience. And because all conscious life is, in a sense, education in so far as it is the attempt to improve either circumstances or one's capacity for dealing with them, therefore each man and woman

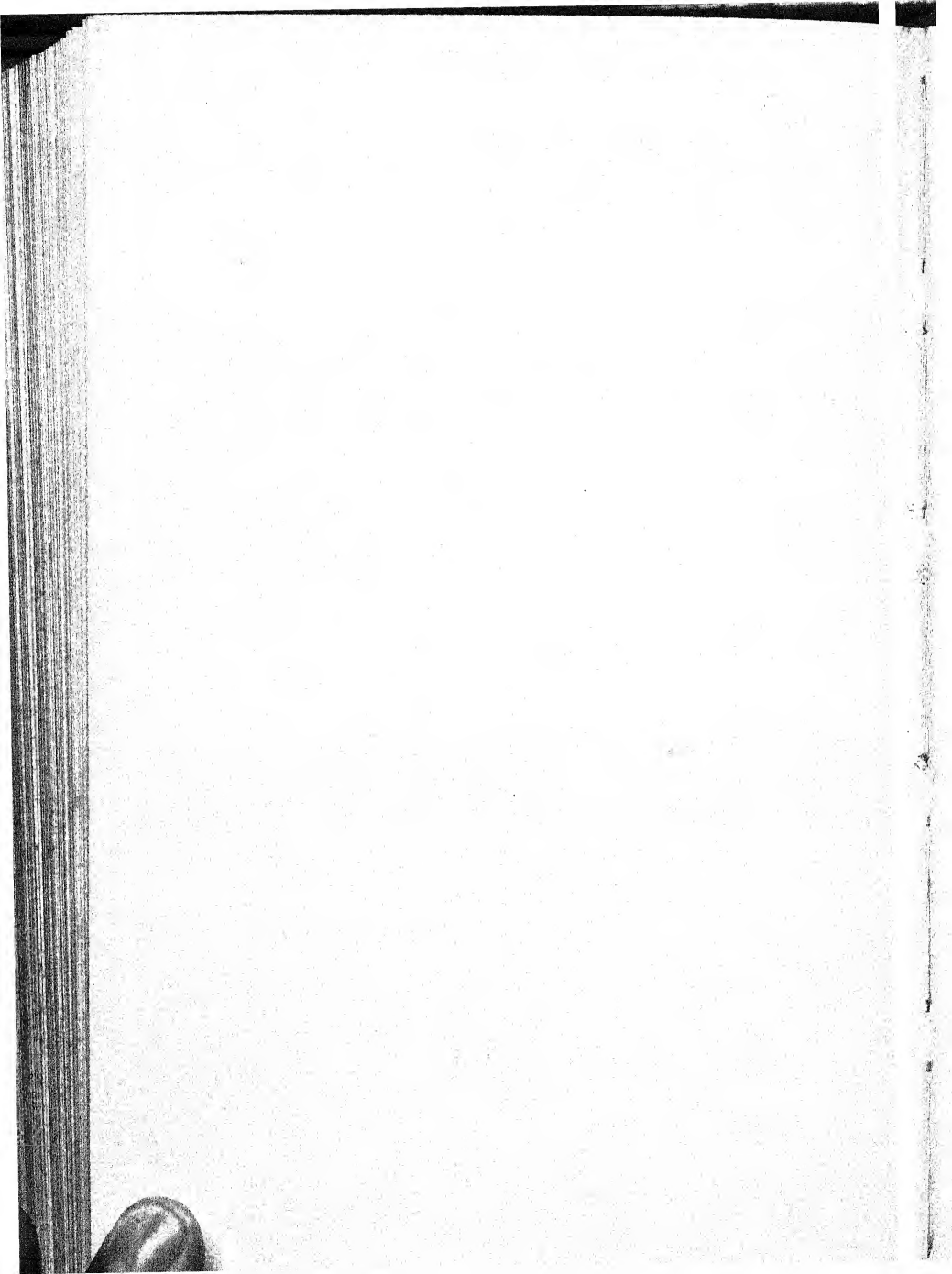
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should be able to bring into play more varied abilities as time goes on. The abilities hitherto unused may be those of an art or a craft or those of a game; they may be physical or intellectual. But here we are concerned chiefly with social abilities, that is to say, abilities for living with other people in such a way that all derive benefit. In its very simplest form, in face-to-face contacts, for example, the ability for conversation may need development; and the defect of the present situation is not due entirely to economic causes, nor to the lack of leisure nor to the inadequacy of past education. The defect of the situation may be due partly to the ignorance among most men of the fact that there is such an art as conversation. And in more important, more controversial aspects of social ability a greater awareness of the conditions under which the work is done which serves our needs would be the result of bringing new abilities into play. But if anyone thinks that he knows enough of such things or that he knows enough at least for his peace of mind, assuming that he can do nothing to change what is evil, then such a person underestimates his own ability and makes too low an appeal to his own character. Moralists have said that a low appeal should not be made to common folk—that a mean ideal degrades men. And the same is true of one's appeal to oneself. Each person can see more clearly and hear more keenly if he is trained; and so each person may become more subtle and skilful in his acquaintance and intercourse with others.



### *Leaders and Nobodies*

The effort of the individual person to live at his full height, not cringing to circumstances nor being ashamed to fail, is the source of the power which the community now needs. But the disturbance of traditional ideals and the violent change of circumstances which some now endure should not throw a man back upon himself alone. That was the mistake of the Stoics and Epicureans in the downfall of traditional paganism. What is needed is not a refuge from the outer world, but a "cause" to fight for within it. What is good should arouse men far more than mere opposition to what is bad. The democratic tradition cannot be maintained only on arguments against violence and authoritarianism. It must be understood and keenly felt for itself. And it is best understood and most keenly felt when men act together for a common cause. The habit of going out to help is the only escape from the fear and jealousy which obstruct what is best in common folk; and that habit is so widespread and so easily aroused to action among nobodies that they can save civilization.



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